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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the writing behavior of young children in a home setting by collecting and analyzing writing samples of three children--Avaleigh, Adam, and Heather (aged four, five, and six years)--and interviewing them about the features, content, reasons, form, and other details of writing done at home. Parents kept a journal detailing interesting circumstances surrounding or giving rise to a particular piece of writing. Over a period of six months, Avaleigh produced 142 pieces of writing and was interviewed seven times; Adam produced 26 pieces of writing and was interviewed seven times; and Heather produced 128 pieces of writing and was interviewed five times. Analysis covered the areas of writing function, writing form, writing features, and the role of significant others in the writing process. Results suggest that active construction of spellings, the use of previous print knowledge, and the development of self-reliant strategies characterized the children's efforts. The theories of James Britton and James Moffett are discussed in light of these observations. The children in this study demonstrated that they were capable of making functional differentiations within their writing--they wrote for a variety of purposes and showed awareness of the necessary conventions for the forms they chose. (Samples of students' writings are included, and interview questions for the child, interview questions for the parent, analyses of children's writing samples, and 86 references are appended. (MM)

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EMERGENT WRITING BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG CHILDREN:

TAKING THE TASK OF WRITING TO TASK

by

David E. Coe

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education
in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Master of Education

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Institutional Address

The Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5S 1V6

Home Address

37 College Street
Kingston, Ontario
Canada K7L 4L5

CS211052

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Abstract

On the premise that children's oral language growth can be easily recognized through observation of their rapid development of vocabulary, sentence structure, and uses during childhood, but that written language development is not so obvious, the present study examines the writing behaviour of young children in a home setting. Issues such as the nature of writing development at home and the purposes for writing in the home are addressed. In particular, the question of whether or not what children do when they write at home is consistent with what is predicted by the theories of James Britton and James Moffet is examined. Observations of young children's writing, in terms of both process and product, were conducted with three children aged four, five and six years respectively, over a period of six months. Data collection strategies included the use of field notes, interview transcripts and written products. Analysis of children's written products and child and parent interview protocols are used to support and refine the development of a new category scheme within which to view the functions of writing as evidenced by the children in the study. Results suggest that active construction of spellings, the use of previous print knowledge and the development of self-reliant strategies predominate children's efforts. Contrary to Moffet's assumptions, young children not only can decentre to address an other-than-immediate audience, but they can also demonstrate a wide range of appropriation. Categorization of the data does not support Britton's contention that children's early writing is undifferentiated as to function. Similarly, the vast array of forms that the children produce weaken Britton's and Moffet's claims about the primacy of story. Implications for both teaching practice and for further research are presented.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 . . . . **1**

INTRODUCTION 1

Purpose 2

Definition of Terms 2

Importance 3

Overview of the Thesis 4

CHAPTER 2 . . . . **5**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE 5

Rationale 5

CHAPTER 3 . . . . **12**

METHOD 12

Research Design 12

The Sample: Characteristics and Parameters 14

Setting 14

Interviews 16

Written Products 17

Addressing Limitations 18

CHAPTER 4 . . . . **20**

ANALYSIS: CHILDREN'S WRITING SAMPLES 20

Overview Of Analysis 20

Function 21

- Form 22
- Features 23

A Closer Look at Britton and Moffet 23

- James Britton 24
- James Moffet 25

Analysis Procedure 26

- Avaleigh, aged four years 28
- Adam, aged five years 29
- Heather, aged six years 29

Analysis and Reporting 33

Context 33

- Avaleigh 34
- Adam 34
- Heather 35

Audience 36

- Avaleigh 36
- Adam 37
- Heather 37

Function 38

- Avaleigh 38
- Adam 38
- Heather 39
- The Children as a Group 39

Form 39

- Avaleigh 40
- Adam 40

Heather 41

The Children as a Group 41

An Overview of Oral and Written Language 42

Function, Use and Intent 42

About Language Functions 43

Learning Oral and Written Language 44

The Relationship Between Oral and Written Language 45

Some Other Classification Possibilities 46

Halliday 47

Smith 48

Wells 48

Tough 49

Baghban 50

Limitations of Other Classification Schemes 51

An Additional Category Scheme 53

A Context for the New Scheme 62

CHAPTER 5 . . . . **64**

ANALYSIS: CHILD INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS 64

Overview of Analysis 64

Significant Others 65

What Does Avaleigh Know About Writing? 66

What Does Adam Know About Writing? 72

What Does Heather Know About Writing? 82

CHAPTER 6 . . . . **94**

ANALYSIS: PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS 94

What Does Willo Say About Avaleigh's Writing? 94

What Does Ann Say About Adam's Writing? 110

What Does Jean Say About Heather's Writing? 123

CHAPTER 7 135

CONCLUSIONS 135

Discussion 135

  Context 135

  Audience 136

  Function 137

  Form 137

An Additional Category Scheme 138

Summary 140

  Implications for Teaching 142

  Implications for Research 144

REFERENCES 147

Appendix A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHILD 153

Appendix B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PARENT 155

Appendix C. ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S WRITING SAMPLES 156

Vita 156

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Avaleigh's writing sample, number 64 30

Figure 2. Adam's writing sample, number 1 31

Figure 3. Heather's writing sample, number 32 32

Figure 4. Heather's writing sample, number 84 54

Figure 5. Adam's writing sample, number 3 55

Figure 6. Avaleigh's writing sample, number 22 56

Figure 7. Heather's writing sample, number 9 57

Figure 8. Adam's writing sample, number 6 58

Figure 9. Heather's writing sample, number 111 59

Figure 10. Heather's writing sample, number 4 60

Figure 11. Heather's writing sample, number 105 61

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

All members of a literate community participate widely in the pragmatic functions of reading and writing (Goodman and Goodman, 1983). Although children's oral language growth can be easily recognized through observation of their rapid development of vocabulary, sentence structure and uses during childhood, written language development is not so obvious. That young children demonstrate many writing-like behaviours before formal instruction does not ensure that adults recognize early written language efforts as an important phase of early reading and writing development. Willo, a parent in the present research reports at the outset of the study:

> She is doing more than she was -- she has these books where she -- you know the fake writing? -- pretend writing?

Quite possibly, parents, teachers and children themselves do not recognize these activities as legitimate reading and writing. As Heather, a six-year-old participant in the present study observes:

> You know, when you sound out words, those aren't -- that isn't real writing, because sometimes you don't have the right answers and others do. Sometimes I do pretend writing. Just scribbly writing, but sometimes I do real writing.

This thesis studies children's early writing behaviours. The present chapter gives an overview of the contents of the thesis. The purpose of the research and its importance are explained; definitions of terms to be used in the reporting are included. More importantly, this chapter not only outlines the content of subsequent chapters of the thesis but also provides the reader with a brief summary of the arguments to be pursued in support of the research questions.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to examine the beginning writing behaviour of young children in a home setting. The study addresses such issues as the nature of writing development at home and the purposes for writing in the home. Data were collected and analyzed to address the following three questions:

1. Is what children do when they write at home consistent with existing suggested theoretical frameworks designed to accommodate apparent aspects of the developmental process?
2. How might the contexts surrounding writing in the home be best described?
3. How might writing at home be viewed with respect to specific criteria such as function, form, features and significant others?

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this research, it is necessary to provide the reader with, if not a complete definition of terms, at least an indication of their intended use. "Emergent writing" and "beginning writing", used interchangeably, refer to the sorts of graphic things that children do as they begin to translate oral language to written forms. How children aged four to six years make sense of the written code is considered to be beginning or emergent. The term "function" refers to the intent, uses and purposes of written language, while "form" indicates kinds of writing and what they might look like.

The term "features" refers to salient characteristics and conventions of writing while "significant others" is used to refer to persons that appear to have influences in the writing environment.

Importance

The thesis research is important for several reasons. First, a contemporary assumption is that professionals have much to teach children and parents. Although some researchers have examined the influence of the home environment on literacy in general, talking to parents and observing children talking and writing in the home may be worthy of further consideration. Insights may be gained that contribute to deeper understanding of the nature of the relationships among teachers, parents and children. Involvement in these collaborative relationships may help to determine the extent to which home and school can or should be more alike for children, mindful of the important consideration that the ultimate goal is growth and development of the individual child.

Second, these ideas have important implications for the fostering of early writing in the schools and for the appreciation of appropriate curricula. Increasing numbers of young children are being admitted to a variety of preschool situations. Ability to deal expertly with and to appreciate the developmental characteristics of young children has always been necessary in education and it is the responsibility of all those concerned with early childhood education to understand the difficulties that children face in coming to terms with a process as complex and abstract as writing. At the same time, a knowledge of and an appreciation for the relationship between potential and actual achievement of young children is required. Care must be taken to ensure that what has the potential to become legitimate curriculum within the day care, nursery school or early primary program is consistent with and informed by knowledge about the developmental abilities of young children. While recent research on emergent reading behaviour has contributed in an important way to current pedagogy in that area, the present study of emergent writing behaviour has the potential to create modifications in composition instruction specifically, but more importantly in curriculum implementation and classroom practice.

Third, the present work should serve to augment existing knowledge concerning the nature, purposes and features of beginning writing at home.

Overview of the Thesis

Chapter Two describes the origin of the research questions and reviews the pertinent literature that might inform answers to those questions. From the literature, it develops an argument in support of the present work. Chapter Three describes the methodology used in the research and defends, from the literature, the reasons for its selection and use. Details about sample selection and characteristics are discussed.

The analysis of the data is addressed in Chapters Four, Five and Six. In Chapter Four, the body of writing samples is used to test assumptions derived from the theories of James Britton and James Moffet. In addition, the writing samples are examined, classified and discussed from a number of perspectives. In Chapter Five, analysis and discussion go hand in hand as a myriad of influences in the writing environment of young children are explored. A number of issues relevant to children's understandings of written language are discussed. Descriptions of comments, views and perceptions, drawn from both interviews and discussions with children in the context of the writing samples, are presented. Chapter Six follows the same format as the preceding chapter and reports comments, views and perceptions, drawn from both interviews and discussions with parents in the context of the writing samples.

Chapter Seven returns to the analysis of the data to discuss what the data mean in terms of child behaviour and parent practice. The theories of Britton and Moffet are re-examined in light of what has been reported. An additional typology of writing functions is advanced and explained in the context of the unique data from the present study. Implications for teaching practice and for further research are also discussed in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter describes the origin of the research questions and reviews the pertinent literature that might inform answers to those questions. From the literature, it develops an argument in support of the present work.

Rationale

The argument put forth in the rationale has four sections. The first section deals with some apparent difficulties involved in attempting to fit certain observed aspects of young children's emergent writing behaviour into some current theoretical models of writing development. The second section examines some implications of writing curricula that are developed from these models. The third section advances an argument in support of more developmentally appropriate writing curricula. The final section makes a case for the importance of an appreciation of contextual factors surrounding children's writing as researchers attempt to understand writing development.

The research interest is prompted by observations that some writings of some young children, that is the quality and the form of the writing, are not consistent with widely accepted theoretical positions, in terms of their restrictive characterizations of children's capabilities in early writing. A number of recent studies (Bissex, 1980; Gundlach, 1982; Taylor, 1983) that examine children's writing in home settings, and explorations by Newkirk (1984, 1985) have raised questions about some assumptions concerning the development of written language, particularly those of Britton (1970, 1975, 1982) and Moffet (1968, 1985).

A closer look at Britton's work reveals several assumptions that warrant re-examination. He postulates a model that distinguishes types of writing in terms of the functions that language may serve. Three types of writing are advanced: expressive, poetic and transactional. The conception of the expressive function of language occupies a central and beginning point in the account.

While the poetic mode is more concerned with the form and qualities of language in writing and the transactional mode incorporates all the informative and persuasive uses of written language, Britton contends that in the earliest stages, beginning writers most naturally use what may be termed the expressive mode. In addition, Britton sees beginning writers as dependent on the resources of speech. Newkirk (1984) expresses reservations about the following assumptions by Britton:

1. Children's early writing is relatively undifferentiated in function; as they develop, young writers are capable of making functional differentiations. Early undifferentiated writing is expressive and resembles written down speech (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod and Rosen, 1975; Britton, 1982).
2. The primary starting point for young writers is the story; children who learn to write between the ages of five and six do so by writing stories (Britton, 1982).

An examination of Moffet's (1968, 1985) model of writing development may reveal some flaws because it depicts beginning writers as far more limited than may be the case. Moffet argues that students develop along two dimensions. The first, the referential dimension, concerns the writer's relations to the subject matter; initially the writer cannot go beyond the immediate. Progressively, through memory, generalization and ultimately speculation, the writer is able to abstract from immediate experience. The second line of development occurs along the rhetorical dimension. Moffet states that initially the writer is capable of addressing only an intimate audience, the self; as social cognition develops the writer is able to address increasingly distant and unfamiliar audiences. Moffet, like Britton, sees beginning writers as dependent on the resources of speech. Newkirk (1985) is skeptical of the following assumptions by Moffet:

1. Beginning writers are generally limited to writing about what is happening and can only put that information in the narrative form (Moffet, 1968, 1985).
2. Beginning writers are limited to an intimate audience and initially have difficulty decentring to address an audience (Moffet, 1968, 1985).

If these claims about developmental abilities are true, then a number of predictions about what children might be expected to do should follow from an examination of the beginning writing of young children. It may be reasonable to expect that young children would have difficulty writing for an audience other than themselves and that children would not choose to use forms of discourse that reach beyond an immediate audience. Instances of non-narrative forms of writing would be few and minimal competence in writing for expository or informative purposes would be seen. Narratives would be plentiful. Difficulties in appropriating written models and alternate forms that may be part of the written language surrounding the child might be evident. It would also seem to follow that few examples of writing that exemplify the qualities of role-playing, argument, persuasion, regulation, apology, demand or speculation would be noted in the beginning writing of young children.

Researchers who have examined early literacy in home settings (Bissex, 1980; Gundlach, 1982; Harste, Burke and Woodward, 1983) provide evidence to suggest that children learn to write by attempting a wide range of functions and genres, and not exclusively by writing stories (Newkirk, 1984). Hudson (1985) reports that through observations in home and school settings, researchers are finding that many children write by choice and this self-sponsored writing may differ dramatically from assigned writing in school. Comparative studies of home and school writing indicate that teachers often overlook or deny the importance of such products as "real" writing. The observations that prompt the present study suggest that children do indeed appreciate the pragmatic nature of writing and do demonstrate the use of a wide range of appropriation. That is, young writers might write for a variety of purposes and might show some awareness of the appropriate conventions for each. As Newkirk (1984) points out, citing evidence by Bridge (1983) that documents the use of regulative and persuasive language by kindergarten children, current theories of writing development may underestimate this range of possibilities.

It follows then that there are implications for any piece of school curriculum that is grounded in a theoretical model of writing development. Following the functions of writing described by Britton (1970), the Ministry of Education for Ontario (1982) states that "the order in which it seems most natural to classify types of writing reveals a great deal about the development of writing ability" (p. 57). The Ministry asserts that, in the early stages of learning to write, it is the expressive form that comes most naturally and that teachers should emphasize this mode with children.

Any model that suggests that beginning writers are limited to a single kind of discourse may not fully acknowledge the integrity and diversity of the beginning writer. The view that writing development arises from a single source fails to account for the fact that emergent writers may develop facility and understanding by attempting a variety of discourse forms simultaneously.

Perhaps, then, a writing curriculum ought to reflect a more adequate model that shows the ways in which development occurs in a variety of forms. A writing curriculum that advocates a process approach to writing instruction, that is, an orientation based on the premise that children best learn to write by writing, may be consistent with Dyson's (1982) contention that, if adult notions of what writing is are abandoned and child definitions of writing are accepted, then operational knowledge which can be built upon, will be discovered. An argument in support of a curriculum that builds on personal writing, builds the purposes for such writing with real audiences and helps children to find frequent and real purposes for such writing with real audiences, is now advanced.

Read (1975) has shown that, while children's first attempts to write may not appear meaningful because of a seemingly random arrangement of letters and incorrect spelling, children are often using letters purposefully. Using letter names and sound-symbol relationships, children create their own spellings which Read has termed "invented spellings". Chomsky (1979) states that inventing spelling is one of the concrete strategies that children use to acquire knowledge about written language. Several features of invented spelling have been recognized (Clay, 1975; Temple, Nathan and Burris, 1982) and frameworks to accommodate apparent stages in the developmental process have been suggested (Graves, 1983; Clay, 1975). Since many of these early reading-writing behaviours generally arise naturally without direction from adults, their significance is often overlooked and ignored. Therefore children are not helped to realize that they are already reading and writing as well as building knowledge about written language, including its various functions and forms. Since experimentation is an important aspect in the acquisition of written language, aware adults may focus on activities that permit and promote natural language development.

Some traditional school language arts programs may not help students to develop a personal, functional need for being authors of stories, poems, books, reports and other forms of writing. Quite possibly, the purpose of writing tasks that children encounter as they progress through school, from the child's point of view, is to satisfy an external demand and not an internal expressive or communicative need. Many school writing assignments involve either imaginary audiences or no explicit audiences at all. Furthermore, teachers have tended to be evaluators rather than audiences or respondents (Goodman and Goodman, 1983).

An approach then, in which the combined processes of writing and reading, centred on child-organized and created text are appreciated and encouraged, may contribute significantly to an awareness of the written language system. Many of the activities that begin as personal writing will become interpersonal as children expand their focus on self to a focus on communication with others. It is only when language is interpersonal that the writer can build a sense of how completely a message must be represented and how form must support function. Children must be given opportunities to explore a variety of forms, structures and content in their writing including the functional nature of spelling, handwriting, dictionary use, language analysis and so on.

If those involved in literacy development can understand the strengths children have when they come to school, if they can appreciate the inter-relationship between language and thinking and if they believe that children have already started to read and write as they have actively participated in their literate environment, a curriculum can be developed that expands on children's knowledge. Above all, the child will find a personal significance for becoming literate.

That teachers have been evaluators of children's writing, rather than audiences or respondents, may have contributed to what Hudson (1986) refers to as the practice of children being "taught, directly or indirectly, to channel their writing to the limited context of writing for a teacher's evaluation" (p. 294). Yet, as is seen in the present study, young children are capable of writing in a surprising variety of ways, for a number of different audiences using language in refreshing and innovative ways in an intriguing range of situations.

Hudson (1986) reports that recent developments in writing research have refocused attention away from an examination of products alone and toward a more complete understanding of the writer and the wider contexts that give rise to writing. Farr (1986) observes however, that context can mean many things. It can refer to settings, situations and social actions; writing does not so much occur in contexts as it does constitute them. She concludes that "writing is not a single entity that occurs in different contexts, but that it is a social practice that varies according to the particular use to which it is put in each context" (p. 199).

The varied uses of the word context simply reflect, as Scardamalia and Bereiter (1986) observe, the fact that writing occurs in many different situations and under a variety of conditions. Any attempts then to understand children's development as writers require attention to all the contexts within which writing occurs, examining the motives for writing, the demands of the task and the social supports that prevail in them.

Hudson (1986) speculates that as children encounter a wider range of settings, audiences, purposes and kinds in their writing, they may begin to make adjustments that reflect the influence of these contextual factors. An understanding of the relationship among certain factors and the need to obtain the writer's views of contexts may be critical to making informed judgements about how it is that children develop as writers.

Graves (1981) insists that writing research must involve the fullest possible contexts and not only must they be broadened to include longer and closer looks at children, but they also must be described in greater detail. Observing that "the meaning of any situation is contained in the context of the act" (p. 198), Graves advises researchers to attend to three contextual categories. The first is that of the writing episode. The second concerns the life of the child who writes. The third addresses social-ethnographic concerns or the social practices and values in the child's community. The advice is well-heeded and such concerns guide the present research.

In the next chapter the research design and methodology are detailed. Information about the participants in the study is presented.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter describes the methodology used in the research and defends, from the literature, the reasons for its selection and use. Details about sample selection, criteria and characteristics are discussed. This section also describes the data.

Research Design

A naturalistic approach to research modelled from ethnographic inquiry was adopted and seen to be the most useful for examining the beginning writings of young children. In its broadest sense, naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) is a method of research that considers how the experiences of an individual(s) are influenced by and, in turn, influence its surrounding context. It is field- based rather than laboratory- based and as such, requires that behaviour be examined in natural settings. Because, as Kamil, Langer and Shanahan (1985) suggest, the focus of ethnographic research is on human behaviour from the learner's point of view, in this case, writing from the child's point of view, it is often necessary for the researcher to assume the role of participant observer.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer a number of reasons in support of the use of a naturalistic inquiry paradigm to address certain research questions. Such considerations guide the thesis research.

Electing to carry out the research in a natural setting, the home, is justified because writing done by young children in that particular context cannot be fully understood in isolation from that context. Participant observation, using ethnographic data gathering techniques, is justified because it is essentially impossible to devise a non-human instrument that is sensitive to the nuances of human interaction. Likewise, the tacit background knowledge brought to the scene by the researcher is legitimate in interpreting those nuances. Qualitative methods are preferred since they are adaptable to dealing with multiple realities and influences that may be encountered in the course of the research. Purposive sampling, that is choosing three children who are already writing in what might be seen as a supportive home context, increases the likelihood that a fuller perspective of that reality will be gained.

While some guidelines for research design were suggested at the proposal stage of the present work, allowing the research design to emerge and develop over the period of the study is of benefit since that which emerges as a function of interaction between the researcher and the line of inquiry is largely unpredictable in advance. Talking to children and talking to parents, negotiating meanings and interpretations, is justified because it is their constructions of reality that the researcher seeks to understand. Finally, choosing to report the research in a case study mode is advisable since it not only allows a thick description of the multiple realities encountered to be given, but also because it is suited to demonstrating the variety of mutually shaping influences present.

Observations of young children's writing, in terms of both process and product, were conducted with three children aged four, five and six years respectively, over a period of six months. Data collection strategies included the use of field notes, interview transcripts and written products.

While it is not known what percentage of preschool children write, or the precise ages at which those who do write, begin, Gardner and Wolf (1979) note that during the preschool period from two to five years of age, a child does learn to use symbols of several kinds. Long before encountering their first lesson or spelling book, children, aroused by the puzzling products adults call writing, experiment with this process (Dyson, 1982). If the children studied by Read (1975), Bissex (1980) and Gundlach (1982) represent a larger population, it is reasonable to suppose that many children experiment with writing in a home setting, before they are taught in school. Information was gathered from one study site: the home setting.

The Sample: Characteristics and Parameters

While much is known concerning beginning reading behaviour in preschool children, research addressing emergent writing behaviour in the home is not as plentiful. An author-generated computer-assisted search of resources in education produced an annotated bibliography of some 213 entries, only 11 of which were concerned with comparative data derived from both home and school contexts.

Setting

The present study involved three children, one at each of the three designated age levels, from a minimum of three homes, selected by informal contact (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). It was felt that both information about child development and about the research proper needed to be shared with each of the parents. There was a necessity for openness, directness, and response to concerns since it was felt that people would be more likely to respond positively to personal appeal. Since this is a study of children and development, socioeconomic factors were not considered to be a major criterion in making home choices. The participants were three young children, Avaleigh, Adam and Heather, aged four, five and six years respectively and their parents, specifically their mothers, Willo, Ann and Jean.

Graves (1981) offers some guidelines when considering parental involvement. Parents were free to remove their child from the study at any time. While questions about study content were shared with the parents, they were asked not to discuss details of involvement with their child nor to change, in any appreciable way, the nature of the interaction with their child. Active support and genuine interest on the part of the parents was certainly imperative to the present investigation because their help in providing background information and other insights about the child's development was crucial. As will be seen in the interview protocols, both parent and child interest remained robust; that the data collection ended was somewhat of a disappointment to all concerned.

One of the purposes of the research was to gather data about writing done in the home, thus it was important that the three children involved were already responding to, interacting with and organizing the written language in their daily world (Goodman, 1980). While the degree of parental involvement and intervention in the child's writing need not be a prerequisite, an appreciation of children's early efforts may be an important consideration. Likewise, physical provisions that allow writing to occur at home must be a feature of the selected home settings. On several occasions it was necessary for the researcher to replenish the home supply of writing implements and paper.

Although Graves (1981) insists that contexts must be broadened to include closer and longer looks at children while they are writing, direct access to process data was somewhat restricted. Provision was made to visit regularly each of the home sites for several hours; mutually convenient times were arranged with each of the parents. During each home visit, any writing that the child may have done since the previous visit was examined and discussed with the child and parent. On several occasions, and with each of the three children, there were times when no writing had been done. As a result, none was collected for reproduction, but the visit was used to discuss writing-related issues and to clear up any concerns that parents or children might have had. Only on fortuitous occasions, or when the children were not at school, was the child engaged in some writing activity. Nor was it possible to rely on video recordings of writing behaviour.

Interviews

One of the difficulties in writing research is that inferences made on the basis of written products alone do not provide sufficient insight into what the child is doing and in particular is thinking about written composition. It seemed then that the technique of interview would be a valuable one for uncovering information that could lead to inferences about the processes inherent in writing behaviour. However, it was equally apparent that interviews must be constructed with care and conducted with discretion.

An interview schedule was constructed that attempted to elicit perceptions of writing from each of the participants by asking similar sorts of questions. The questions followed a general guideline used by Hudson (1985). Notions related to writing such as kinds, audience, purposes, content, context, preferences and attendant knowledge and skills were sampled. A complete interview schedule for children and parents can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

Information was gathered primarily through interviews in which the child discussed features, content, reasons, form and other details of writing done at home. That five- and six-year-olds are able to re-read or story-match a set of scribble to a specific message even weeks after the writing (Heald-Taylor, 1984) lends credence to the procedure of child interview. Moreover, Stewart (1986) reports that interviews with kindergarten children provide reliable descriptions of how they perceived their developing literacy. As well, a number of researchers (Hudson, 1985; Milz, 1982; Duncan, 1985; Moss, 1985 and Dyson, 1983) have used the interview technique to considerable advantage.

Examination of ongoing writings and discussions with the child about reasons, choices and perceptions of writing helped to provide process-product data within the context of each child's development allowing insight into not only the active construction of knowledge by children but also the supportive context of people and things that enable this construction.

Parents were asked to maintain a log or journal in which they might detail interesting circumstances surrounding or giving rise to a particular piece of writing. Reactions to whatever was considered to be important about the writing or the research itself, were appreciated. Logs provided contextual details about the child's writing: when or where done, amount of time taken to write, relationship to recent or immediate experience, topic, to or for whom written, source of ideas and reasons for writing. Also the content of each log had the potential to provide insight into parents' perceptions of and attitudes to writing. Interviews were conducted with parents to discuss writing related topics such as behaviour, reasons, support, expectations and perceptions.

Written Products

Finally, collection and reproduction of written products for analysis provided comparative data with respect to specific features of home writing. At the same time, it was allowed that as observations were made over a period of time, new areas of study could be identified and new leads considered.

Avaleigh's writing spanned a period of 175 days and included four collection times. Interviews with Avaleigh and her mother Willo were conducted on seven occasions. Avaleigh produced a sample of 142 pieces of writing for examination and susequent analysis. Adam's writing spanned a period of 139 days and included five collection times. Interviews with Adam and his mother Ann were conducted on seven occasions. Adam produced a sample of 26 pieces of writing for examination and subsequent analysis. Heather's writing spanned a period of 178 days and included nine collection times. Interviews with Heather and her mother Jean were conducted on five occasions. Heather produced a sample of 128 pieces of writing for examination and subsequent analysis.

Data collected were in the form of field notes, interview protocols and samples of the children's writing. Analysis of the data covered four major areas. The first addressed functions of writing. The second area concerned form of writing. The third attended to features while the final area of analysis involved the role of significant others in the writing process. While analysis was carried out individually on the data from each source, an important aspect of the analysis process involved determining if lines of inquiry were supported by data from each of the sources.

Addressing Limitations

In order to establish credibility of interpretation, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) suggestions to meet trustworthiness criteria were adopted. These included: prolonged engagement to provide scope, persistent observation to provide depth and triangulation to substantiate descriptive data from the variety of sources. The technique of peer debriefing was employed to the extent that both meanings of the data and the basis for interpretation of them were clarified on numerous occasions with several faculty members. Moreover, it afforded an opportunity to develop and test steps in the emerging design. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) attest, "naturalistic inquiry is a lonely business" and the debriefing sessions indeed provided "an opportunity for catharsis" (p. 308).

Referential adequacy materials in the form of numerous writing samples and many hours of audio tapes were compiled. In addition, the researcher was, during the course of the thesis research, engaged in a study of the composing process of kindergarten children, involving a sample of some 60 children. Using this work and the subsequent data generated as a benchmark, opportunities for testing interview techniques, data analysis and interpretations were afforded.

Finally, the technique of member checks was employed whereby researcher notions about data, analytic categories, interpretations and tentative conclusions were shared with both the children and parents in the study.

In the next chapter, the first of three that analyze the resulting data, the writing samples are examined from a number of perspectives and in particular, in the context of what might be predicted about children's writing from the theories of Britton and Moffet.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS: CHILDREN'S WRITING SAMPLES

This is the first of three chapters that addresses analysis of the data. In this chapter, the body of writing samples is used to test assumptions derived from the theories of James Britton and James Moffet. In addition, the writing samples are examined, classified and discussed from a number of perspectives.

Overview Of Analysis

Too often in writing research, findings may be limited by having a predetermined data analysis procedure that is not flexible enough to view data holistically (Lamme and Childers, 1983). Qualitative analysis seeks to develop categories and patterns of behaviours that contribute to comprehensive descriptions and interpretations of events (Dyson, 1983). If information from one study is to be used at another teaching site, with other children, the most thorough description of contextual factors must be given.

While it was expected that some categories for tabulation would emerge from an holistic consideration of the data, it was initially thought useful to examine the data as a function of several other frameworks available in the research literature.

Of course, the work of Britton and Moffet was critical to informed judgements about the children's writing. However, as the analysis proceeded, it became apparent that not all the data were explained satisfactorily by these models of writing development.

Efforts were then made to examine other frameworks that might better describe the functions of language in ways that reflected the present data. When viewed in the context of what is known about oral and written language differences, limitations of these other frameworks began to surface and were noted. Analysis of the data thus began to be a dynamic and interactive process, whereby samples were constantly being tried against various theoretical models. The outcome of this exercise was the development of an author-generated category scheme that was believed to be more suitable and useful in describing the functions of the written language as seen in the present samples.

This category scheme used to describe written language function derives from an analytic procedure that viewed the samples of writing from a number of perspectives simultaneously, thus allowing judgements about the pieces of writing to be made with the benefit of ample context description. While attempts are made in this chapter to present the analysis process in as logical and linear a fashion as possible, the task is somewhat complicated since holistic interpretation demands dynamic approaches to data. To facilitate the development of a logical argument to support the steps in the analysis procedure, the description is clarified with summaries and alternative directions for the reader. A description of the proposed areas of analysis and their application follows.

Function

If the contentions of Britton and Moffet are accurate, then early writing should be relatively undifferentiated in terms of function and should, in addition to being expressive and egocentric, resemble speech written down. Functional differentiation might be predicted in some samples of writing from children at the upper end of the age range.

The writing samples were examined from the perspective of Britton's theory. Enumerative procedures were used to determine the percentage of written pieces that could be included in the various functional categories of Britton's model of writing development. To that end, the interview protocols and accompanying written products were coded to categorize the writing, viewing function within a variety of contextual factors.

In addition, a number of schemes that describe the functions of language were considered to be likewise appropriate for analysis of the present data. These included the frameworks of Halliday (1975), Smith (1977), Wells (1973), Tough (1979) and Baghban (1984).

Form

Britton (1982) contends that the primary starting point for young writers is the story, while Moffet (1968) postulates that beginning writers, limited to writing about the immediate, put that information in the narrative form.

Sowers' (1981) functional definition of narrative as any piece of writing that is ordered chronologically was used as the the criterion for including samples of writing within the category of narrative writing. This definition was seen to be consistent with Moffet's notion that narrative is the reporting of what has happened. Moreover, Sowers (1981) uses this criterion successfully in a previous study in which she examined children's preferences for narrative and non-narrative writing in the primary grades. Enumerative procedures were used to determine the percentage of pieces that fell into the narrative category.

It was equally useful to return to Newkirk's (1985) contention that the many forms of young children's non-narrative writing are the early beginnings of what might be considered exposition, argument and requests. The range of these forms and the kinds of writing that the children produced were noted.

Features

Since all written work was to be reproduced, it was originally expected that product data would be charted to show not only characteristics of, but also changes in, the children's use and development of conventions such as punctuation, handwriting and spelling. After a short time, this aspect of the study was abandoned, even though data continued to be gathered and be available.

Clay's (1975) observations about beginning writers' gradual development and awareness of concepts and principles seemed to be an appropriate background against which to view features of beginning writing. For the most part, what the children did in their writing was seen to be contained comfortably within the parameters of Clay's work. One feature however, proved to be of interest, that of the relationship between print and illustration in the children's written products.

A Closer Look at Britton and Moffet

It is useful then at this point to return to the work of James Britton and James Moffet. A recapitulation of their models of writing development is now advanced to provide additional context within which to view the samples of writing for analysis. Integral to the analysis of the writing samples will be a reference to the work of both theorists since possible weaknesses in their theories of writing development gave rise to the original research questions.

James Britton

James Britton (1970, 1975) distinguishes the principal functions of written language by advancing three main categories. The three main function categories are expressive, poetic and transactional. The conception of the expressive function of language occupies a central and beginning point in his model of writing development. Britton predicts that what children write in the early stages should be a form of expressive speech and that children will develop from this starting point into the other kinds of writing, the differentiated forms of mature writing.

Expressive writing is writing intended for the writer's own use and concerns the immediate. It is language close to the self and might include personal letters and writing to explore feelings, moods and proccupations of the moment.

Poetic writing is essentially a construct, writing to produce a pattern. Language is ordered and shaped to produce an intended design, being less casual or natural than expressive writing. While narratives may be written poetically, it is generally language that exists for its own sake.

Transactional writing is writing to get things done. Its uses may include writing that is intended to inform, advise, persuade or instruct. The language used will vary according to the demands of the transaction. Britton further subdivides transactional writing into informative and conative. Informative language is used to make information available; conative language implies the writer's intentions to influence the reader. The use of the transactional as an integral category is sufficient for discussion of the present data.

A further notion that may serve to clarify the distinctions among the three categories is that of audience. As noted, expressive writing has an immediate, close to the writer audience, while the uses associated with the poetic mode imply a slightly more distanced audience. The transactional mode of writing concerns a wider and more distanced (from the writer) audience.

James Moffet

Moffet (1968) proposes four categories for describing writing functions. They are recording, reporting, generalizing and theorizing. Like Britton, he sees beginning writers as dependent on the resources of speech and supports Britton to the extent that monologue forms the best basis for writing. The first written forms internalized are those of narrative, since anecdotes and stories, spoken or written, are part of the child's social experience from the very beginning.

Moffet (1968, 1985) postulates that children develop as writers along two dimensions. The first, the referential dimension, concerns the writer's relations to the subject matter; initially the writer cannot go beyond the immediate. Progressively, through memory, generalization and ultimately speculation, the child is able to abstract from immediate experience. While adults differentiate language functions and use such forms as narrative, generalizations and speculations, children are limited to the use of one form, "the logic of lowest verbal abstraction" (p. 34), that of "chronologic" or narrative.

Moffet (1968) claims that children function almost entirely in a narrative mode, that is , using language, oral and written, entirely through stories. He claims:

> Whereas adults differentiate their thought into specialized kinds of discourse such as narrative, generalization and theory, children must for a long time make narrative do for all. They utter themselves almost entirely through stories - real or invented - and they apprehend what others say through story. (p. 49)

If children do generalize or speculate, Moffet claims that they do so only in very short utterances.

The second line of development occurs along the rhetorical dimension, the relationship between writer and reader. For children, the task of differentiating among modes of discourse and kinds of audiences, Moffet claims, is "essentially a matter of decentering, of seeing alternatives, of standing in others' shoes" (p. 57). Since the capacity to take the reader's point of view is necessary for writing, the young writer is characterized as somewhat handicapped. Moffet contends that early discourse is first for the self, then for an immediate audience, then for a well-known audience that is not immediately present, and only later for a distant and unknown audience. As social cognition develops, the writer is able to address increasingly distant and unfamiliar audiences.

While Moffet rejects any implication that development follows unilateral movement, he clearly feels that movement along these dimensions constitutes a kind of intellectual growth that can then inform a language arts curriculum.

In order to begin to view the present data in the context of Britton and Moffet's respective theories, it is helpful to recall Britton's assumptions. They are:

1. Children's early writing is relatively undifferentiated in function; as they develop, young writers are capable of making functional differentiations. Early undifferentiated writing is expressive and resembles speech written down. (Britton, Burgess, Martin, Mcleod and Rosen, 1975; Britton, 1982).
2. The primary starting point for young writers is the story; children who learn to write between the ages of five and six do so by writing stories (Britton, 1982).

Moffet's assumptions are likewise reitterated:

1. Beginning writers are generally limited to writing about what is happening and can only put that information in the narrative form (Moffet, 1985).
2. Beginning writers are limited to an intimate audience and initially have difficulty decentring to address an audience (Moffet, 1985).

Analysis Procedure

Unlike a number of previous studies of children's writing that make inferences about writing processes based solely on observations of products, the present work relies heavily on context. Hudson (1986) observes that only recently has writing research begun to focus attention away from products alone and toward an examination of the writer and the wider contexts in which writing occurs. It may be that as children write in a variety of settings, appreciate a range of audiences, make decisions about purposes and determine various and appropriate kinds of writing, their writing develops and may indeed reflect the influence of for a well-known audience that is not immediately present, and only later for a distant and unknown audience. As social cognition develops, the writer is able to address increasingly distant and unfamiliar audiences.

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Parents' comments are important to the analysis, but of equal significance are children's explanations of what it is they were attempting to do as they wrote their pieces of writing. Attention was given to child comments about when the writing was done, who may have helped with the piece and how long it took to complete the writing. In addition, children described content, talked about where ideas for the writing came from and were sometimes quite clear about the reasons that writing was initiated. By referring to parent and child comments about virtually each piece of writing that was done it was possible to establish more fully the context of the writing. Moreover, explicit reasons given by the child, when viewed in this broader context, allowed speculation about what might constitute the function of the writing. It was from this speculation that the category of intent was derived.

A complete example of the analysis procedure is given in Appendix C. Below, the reader is guided through several examples of how this analysis was accomplished using some of the collected writing samples. To this end, one sample drawn from the collection of each child is used.

Essentially, the analysis procedure examines both the writing sample and the child and parent interview protocols to develop an approximation of the circumstances surrounding the writing. What the child said or did with respect to the piece of writing is important here as are indications of ideas that might have given rise to the writing. From this information the category of context is derived. Combining the context now with any explicit reasons that the child might have given in explanation of the writing, helps to develop the category of audience, that is, for whom the piece of writing may have been intended. By now looking at the context of the writing and the intended audience for the writing, it is possible to speculate about the intent of the piece. It is from the category of intent that the additional function typology is developed. The writing sample is now examined in terms of its function with respect to

Britton's scheme for describing the functions of written language and classified accordingly. The writing sample is then viewed in the light of both Moffet's and Britton's contentions about form and classified accordingly. Finally, the writing sample is described in terms of its kind, that is, what it is.

The result is an accessible chart that provides the reader with comparative information about the writing samples, that is, about kinds of writing, contexts of writing, audiences for writing and functions of writing. In addition, the reader is able to locate the writing within the classification schemes of Britton and Moffet to determine both function and form of the writing.

What this procedure looks like in terms of real writing samples is illustrated by examples done by each of the children in the study.

Avaleigh, aged four years

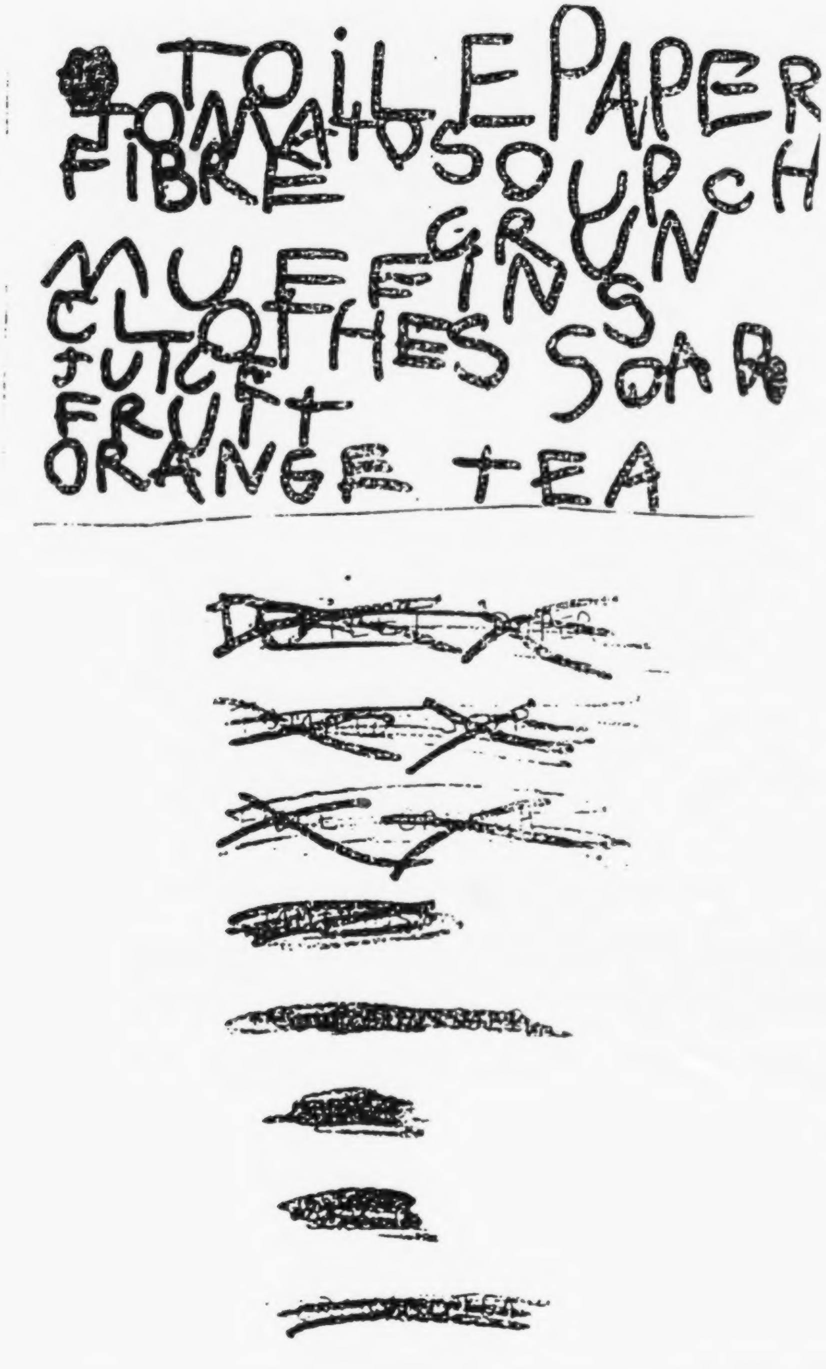
A glance at Avaleigh's writing sample, number 64 (Figure 1), reveals that it is a list. In fact, it is a grocery list, copied from a model that her mother wrote. Doing the shopping is a weekly chore and one in which Avaleigh regularly participates. Willo, her mother, wrote the original list from Avaleigh's dictation. Avaleigh then copied the items on to her own list, crossing out individual recorded items as she proceeded. Avaleigh's reasons, drawn from the interview protocols, were not only that these items were things that were needed at home but also that she wanted to do her mother's grocery list. Avaleigh's comments suggest that the intended audience for the writing is self. The writing, in addition to being transactional in nature in that it serves a definite informative purpose, is clearly non-narrative in form. Viewing the sample of writing in this holistic context allows speculation regarding the functions of the writing. It is concluded that the writing is intended to organize information, to record necessary information and to monitor actions.

Adam, aged five years

Adam's writing sample, number 1 (Figure 2), is a small piece of notebook paper on which are written about 130 seemingly random letters. The writing was done over a period of two days and in the presence of a friend. Adam explains that the writing was done in order to practice with letters. This practice, he indicates, is to learn how to write letters so that he can then show the researcher. Based on his comments, the intended audience can be supposed to be for self and for other, that is, an adult friend. The writing is considered to be transactional in nature in that it is clearly writing to get a job done and is also seen to be non-narrative. From the details provided by this holistic look at this writing sample, it can be reasoned that intended functions of the writing are to practice with print and to demonstrate knowledge.

Heather, aged six years

A glance at Heather's writing sample, number 32 (Figure 3), shows that it is a story done in book format. It is a book with six pages including the cover, entitled "The Summer Girl". The book was written independently, although at a friend's house. What she already knew about book format enabled her to produce the writing in the form that it took. Heather explains that she just thought of and wanted to make a book. Based on her comments about the writing, it is reasoned that the intended audience is both for self and for other, in this case, a general unknown audience. There are clear indications that this is a fictional narrative and is expressive in nature. Considering what has been demonstrated about this particular piece of writing, it is reasonable to claim that the functions are to tell a story and to detail events.



TOiLE PAPER
TOMAtO SOUP
FIBRE GRUNCH
MUFFINS
CLOTHES SOAP
JUICE
FRUIT
ORANGE TEA

Figure 1. Avaleigh's writing sample, number 64: A grocery list.

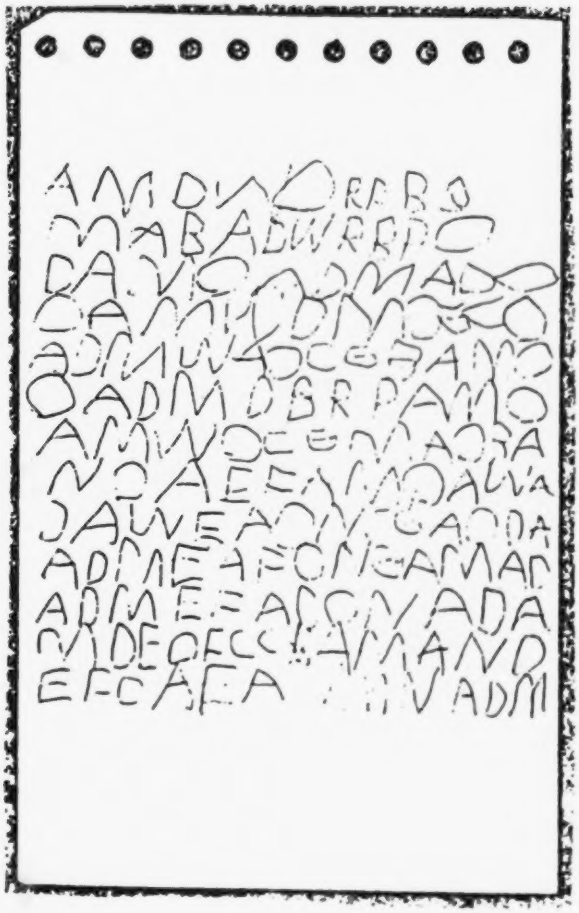


Figure 2. Adam's writing sample, number 1: Miscellaneous letters.

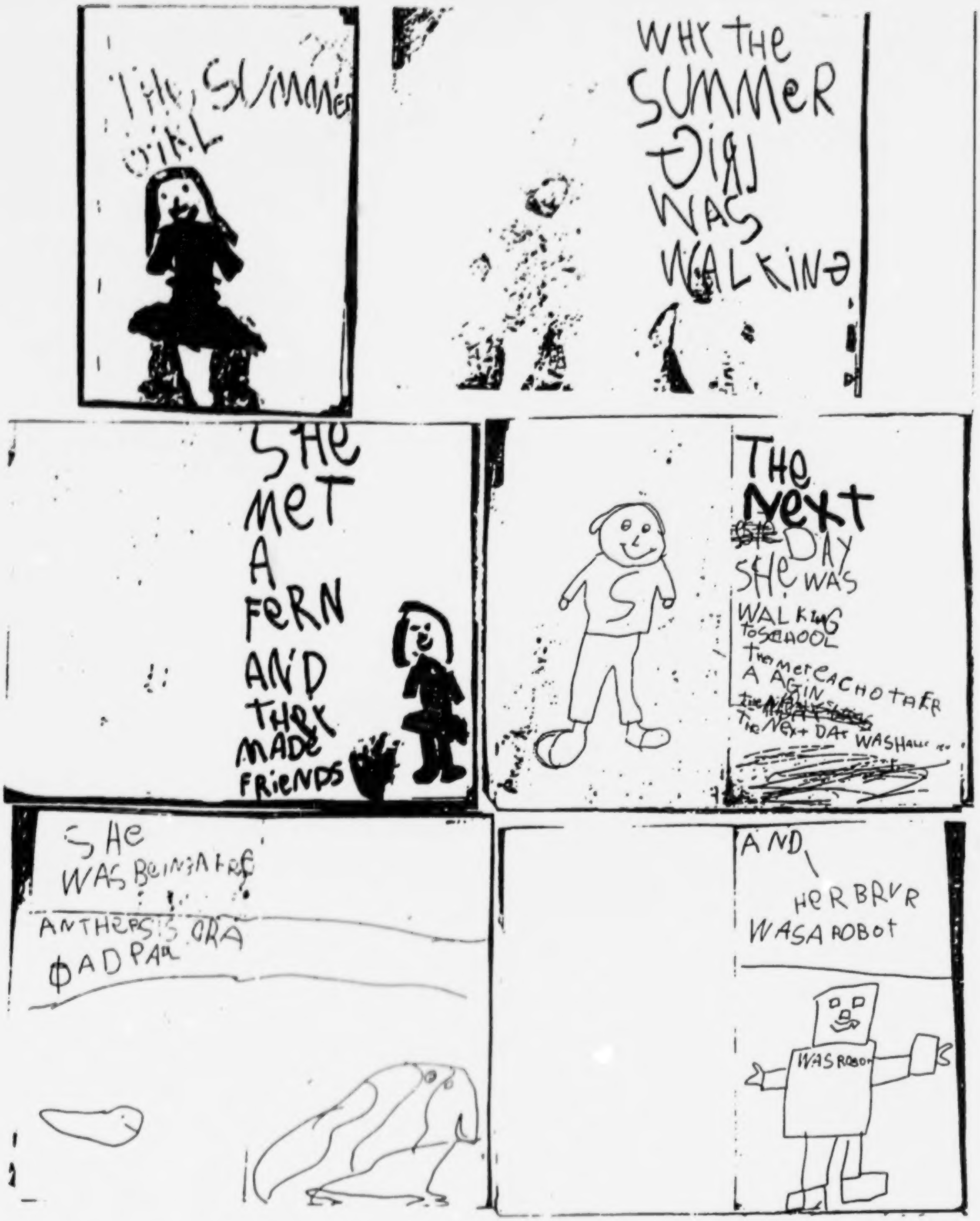

Title Summer Girl
WHr the SUMMeR Girl WAS WALkinG
SHe meT A FeRN AND THey MADe FRieNDS
The Next ~~She~~ DAY SHe WAS WALkinG To School
The meT eACHOTAER A AGIN
The Next DAY WAS HAL...
SHe WAS Being A FRe
AN THeRS A GRA DAD PAR
AND HeR BRVR WAS A ROBOT
WAS ROBOT

Figure 3. Heather's writing sample, number 32: A story in book form.

Analysis and Reporting

In order to describe more fully how pieces of writing were assigned to the categories of the analytic scheme, it is necessary to provide a more complete description of the categories themselves. What is meant by the terms and the criteria used to assign writing to different categories is now explained. In addition, analyzed data in the form of statistical results are reported for each of the three children.

Speculation about what these results might indicate of children's writing behaviours and of parents' practices are not entertained here. These are are reserved for discussion in Chapter Seven.

Context

Contexts were either described as ALONE or WITH HELP. Distinctions within each of these two categories were made as follows:

1. ALONE - a) Independent, using previous print knowledge: The child essentially works alone, that is, free of any personal assistance, and makes independent efforts to spell, construct words and such, using previous print knowledge.

   ALONE - b) Independent, using print sources: The child works alone, that is, no other person assists, but uses reference sources, such as previously written text, books and other print sources.

2. WITH HELP - a) Dependent, with personal assistance provided orally: The child does not work alone but instead is dependent upon a family member or another significant person to provide direct assistance with spelling, print information and so on in an oral manner.

   WITH HELP - b) Dependent, with personal assistance provided by a written model: The child does not work alone, but is instead dependent on assistance from another person to scribe dictation or provide spelling in a written form to be used by the child as a model to copy.

Avaleigh

A total of 142 writing samples were analysed. Of this total, 105/142 (73.9%) were designated as done ALONE. Of the total samples, 37/142 (26.0%) were categorized as done WITH HELP.

When the total samples are viewed in terms of the four distinctions made within the category of context, it can be seen that 73/142 (51.4%) were designated as independent, using previous print knowledge; 32/142 (22.5%) as independent, using print sources; 4/142 (2.8%) as dependent, with personal assistance provided orally; and 33/142 (23.2%) as dependent, with personal assistance provided by a written model.

Of the writing that was designated as done ALONE, 73/105 (69.5%) fell within the category of independent, using previous print knowledge, while 32/105 (30.4%0 were included in the category of independent, using print sources.

Of the writing that was designated as done WITH HELP, 4/37 (10.8%), fell within the category of dependent upon personal assistance provided in an oral manner, while 33/37 (89.1%), were seen as done in a dependent manner with personal assistance provided in the form of a written model.

Adam

A total of 26 writing samples were analysed. Of this total, 15/26 (57.6%) were classified as done ALONE. Of the total samples, 11/26 (42.3%) were categorized as done WITH HELP.

When the total samples are viewed in terms of the four distinctions made within the category of context, it can be seen that 11/26 (42.3%) were designated as independent, using previous print knowledge; 4/26 (15.4%) as independent, using print sources; 8/26 (30.8%) as dependent, with personal assistance provided orally; and 3/26 (11.5%) as dependent, with personal assistance provided by a written model.

Of the writing that was done ALONE, 11/15 (73.3%) were designated as done in an independent manner, using previous print knowledge, while 4/15 (26.6%) were classified as independent, but using print sources.

Of the writing that was designated as having been done WITH HELP, 8/11 (72.7%) fell within the category of dependent upon asssitance provided in an oral manner, while 3/11 (27.3%) were seen to done in a dependent manner with personal assistance provided in the form of a written model.

Heather

A total of 128 writing samples were analysed. Of this total, 103/128 (80.5%) were classified as done ALONE. Of the total samples, 25/128 (19.5%) were categorized as having been done WITH HELP.

When the total samples are viewed in terms of the four distinctions made within the category of context, it can be seen that 88/128 (68.8%) were designated as independent, using previous print knowledge; 15/128 (11.7%) as independent, using print sources; 22/128 (17.2%) as dependent, with personal assistance provided orally; and 3/128 (2.3%) as dependent, with personal assistance provided by a written model.

Of the writing that was done ALONE, 88/103 (85.4%) were found to be done in an independent manner, using previous print knowledge, while 15/103 (14.6%) were categorized as independent, but using print sources.

Of the writing that was designated as done WITH HELP, 22/25 (88.0%) fell within the category of dependent upon personal assistance in an oral manner, while 3/25 (12.0%) were seen to be done in a dependent manner with personal assistance in the form of a written model.

Audience

Audiences were identified as for SELF, OTHER or a combination of SELF AND OTHER. Distinctions were made among these three categories as follows:

1. SELF - No real or intended audience beyond the child was identified.
2. OTHER - a) Unknown: The audience could not be reliably constructed from the context or an examination of the protocols.

   OTHER - b) Unknown, general: A general audience of anyone who by chance might see the product because it is available, is identified.

   OTHER - c) Unknown, wide: A wide, impersonal and distant audience is intended.

   OTHER - d) Immediate Family: The writing was intended for immediate family members, such as mother, father, brother and sister. Pets are included.

   OTHER - e) Extended Family: The writing was intended for grandparents, aunts, uncles, great-aunts and uncles, cousins and other extended family.

   OTHER - f) Peers: The writing was intended child friends and classmates.

   OTHER - g) Non-peers: The writing was intended for adult friends or the child's teacher.
3. SELF AND OTHER - The writing was judged to be serving two audiences simultaneously, that is, as much for self as for others.

Avaleigh

Of the total samples, 2/142 (1.4%) were designated to have an audience of SELF: 69/142 (48.5%) were categorized as having an audience of OTHER, while 71/142 (50%) were judged to be serving a combined audience of SELF AND OTHER.

When the writing is viewed within the distinctions made in the category of OTHER, the following results are obtained. Of the writing that was identified as having an audience of OTHER, 24/140 (17.1%) were classified as for unknown; 41/140 (29.3%) as for unknown, general; 2/140 (1.4%) as for unknown, wide; 36/140 (25.7%) as for immediate family; 1/140 (.7%) as for extended family; 33/140 (23.5%) as for peers; and 2/140 (1.4%) as for non-peers.

Adam

Of the total samples, 0/26 (0%) were designated to have an audience of SELF; 11/26 (42.3%) were categorized as having an audience of OTHER, while 15/26 (57.7%) were judged to be serving a combined audience of SELF AND OTHER.

When the writing is viewed within the distinctions made in the category of OTHER, the following results are obtained. Of the writing that was identified as having an audience of OTHER, 1/26 (3.8%) were classified as for unknown; 9/26 (34.6%) as for unknown, general; 12/26 (46.2%) as for unknown, wide; 3/26 (11.5%) as for immediate family; 0/26 (0%) as for extended family; 0/26 (0%) as for peers; and 1/26 (3.8%) as for non-peers.

Heather

Of the total samples, 12/128 (9.4%) were designated to have an audience of SELF; 60/128 (46.9%) were categorized as having an audience of OTHER, while 56/128 (43.8%) were judged to be serving a combined audience of SELF AND OTHER.

When the writing is viewed within the distinctions made in the category of OTHER, the following results are obtained. Of the writing that was identified as having an audience of OTHER, 12/116 (10.3%) were classified as for unknown; 34/116 (29.3%) as for unknown, general; 7/116 (6.0%) as for unknown, wide; 42/116 (36.2%) as for immediate family; 12/116 (10.4%) as for extended family; 7/116 (6.0%) as for peers; and 2/116 (1.7%) as for non-peers.

Function

Writing was classified according to Britton as EXPRESSIVE, POETIC, TRANSACTIONAL or a combination EXPRESSIVE/TRANSACTIONAL. The following distinctions among Britton's function's are restated as follows:

1. EXPRESSIVE - This is writing intended for the writer's own use and concerns the immediate. It is language close to the self.
2. POETIC - This is essentially a construct. that is, writing to produce a pattern.
3. TRANSACTIONAL - This is writing to get things done and may include writing that is intended to inform, advise, persuade or instruct.
4. EXPRESSIVE/TRANSACTIONAL - Writing was placed in this category if it was judged to be serving simultaneous functions.

Avaleigh

When the writing is viewed within the parameters of the function categories representing Britton's model of writing development, the following results obtain. Of the total samples, 68/142 (47.9%) were categorized as EXPRESSIVE in function; 0/142 (0%) as POETIC; 67/142 (47.1%) as TRANSACTIONAL, while 7/142 (4.9%) were judged to be serving the simultaneous functions of EXPRESSIVE/TRANSACTIONAL.

Adam

When the writing is viewed within the parameters of the function categories representing Britton's model of writing development, the following results obtain. Of the total samples, 8/26 (30.8%) were categorized as EXPRESSIVE in function; 0/26 (0%) as POETIC; 17/26 (65.4%) as TRANSACTIONAL, while 1/26 (3.8%) were judged to be serving the simultaneous functions of EXPRESSIVE/TRANSACTIONAL.

Heather

When the writing is viewed within the parameters of the function categories representing Britton's model of writing development, the following results obtain. Of the total samples, 59/128 (46.1%) were categorized as EXPRESSIVE in function; 4/128 (3.1%) as POETIC; 50/128 (39.0.1%) as TRANSACTIONAL, while 15/128 (11.7%) were judged to be serving the simultaneous functions of EXPRESSIVE/TRANSACTIONAL.

The Children as a Group

When the writing done by each child is combined to produce a total sample of 296 pieces and viewed within the function categories that represent Britton's theory, the following results are obtained. Of the aggregate total samples, 135/296 (45.6%) were categorized as EXPRESSIVE in function; 4/296 (1.4%) as POETIC; 134/296 (45.3%) as TRANSACTIONAL, while 23/296 (7.8%) were judged to be serving the simultaneous functions of EXPRESSIVE/TRANSACTIONAL.

Form

Writing was classified, in order to examine Moffet's and Britton's claims about the primacy of story, as either NARRATIVE or NON-NARRATIVE. Distinctions between the two categories are as follows:

1. NARRATIVE - Sowers' (1981) functional definition of narrative as any piece of writing that is ordered chronologically, was used as the criterion for including samples of writing within this category.
2. NON-NARRATIVE - This category included writing that did not exemplify the qualities of narrative and included such forms as lists, letters, signs, puzzles, games and cards.

Avaleigh

Of the total samples, 3/142 (2.1%) were defined as NARRATIVE in form, while 139/142 (97.9%) were categorized as NON-NARRATIVE in form.

When her writing was examined to determine the range of forms and to describe the kinds of writing that were done, it was seen that Avaleigh engaged in a variety of different kinds of writing. These included lists, love letters, stories in book form, signs, puzzles, friendly letters, greeting cards, invitations, labels, games and scribbles. In addition, a number of forms were noted that were not readily assigned to discrete categories. These included such writing forms as information notes about self (name, age), as well as pictures, designs or number work with name. Moreover, other forms such as information notes about the alphabet, numbers and musical notes were observed. Avaleigh also produced alphabet book-like pages and experimented with miscellaneous letters and words using both print and commercial stickers and stencils.

Adam

Of the total samples, 6/26 (23.1%) were defined as NARRATIVE in form, while 20/26 (76.9%) were categorized as NON-NARRATIVE in form.

Adam produced a variety of different forms of writing too. These included board games, signs, love letters, recipes, labels, directions, friendly letters, greeting cards, maps and stories in book form. In addition, other forms such as information notes about self (name), and miscellaneous letters and words were noted. Unique to dramatic play, such forms as money, fortunes, napkins and speed control devices were produced.

Heather

Of the total samples, 17/28 (13.3%) were defined as NARRATIVE in form, while 111/128 (86.7%) were categorized as NON-NARRATIVE in form.

When her writing was examined to determine the range of forms and to describe the kinds of writing that were done, it was seen that Heather produced a variety of different kinds of writing forms. These included love letters, musical scores, lists, poems, invitations, labels, friendly letters, greeting cards, scribbles, signs, song lyrics, stories in book form. directions, calendars, replies, queries, menus, captions, diary entries, business letters, permission slips and badges. Additional forms such as information notes about self (name, age), information notes about family, and pictures, number facts and designs with name were observed. Heather also engaged in other kinds of writing including miscellaneous words and letters, school-type activity sheets, and alphabet book-like pages.

The Children as a Group

When the writing done by each child is combined to produce a total sample of 296 pieces and classified according to form, the following results obtain. Of the aggregate total samples, 26/296 (8.8%) were defined as NARRATIVE in form, while 270/296 (91.2%) were categorized as NON-NARRATIVE in form.

This concludes the presentation of the data as they pertain to context, audience, function and form. While the category schemes of Britton and Moffet provided the principal reference points for description of the data, the reader is reminded that other frameworks were considered as initially useful to describe what the childern did. What follows is an examination of some current understandings about oral and written language as a background against which to view both the present data and other classification schemes that might explain the present findings. When viewed in the context of what is known about oral and written language differences, limitations of these other frameworks become apparent.

An Overview of Oral and Written Language

At this point, it is necessary to develop some notions related to an appreciation of both the aspects of and the relationship between oral and written language, in order to provide the reader with a more complete context within which to examine the various other analytic frameworks that describe language functions.

Function, Use and Intent

Language is dynamic and flexible and attempts to define various aspects of it are indeed elusive and often frustrating; the language that is itself used to describe language use often detracts from its flexibility.

It seems also that there are subtle distinctions to be made among the terms function, use and intent. Objects can have functions. For example, the function of a fork is to assist with eating, a vehicle for piercing or transfering bits of food from a plate to the user's mouth. However, the fork can be used to pry the lid off a pickle jar or create interesting sounds for a young child. Function does not necessarily imply specific use, nor does use indicate original function. The imagination of the user and the intention of the user determine the use to which the object is put. Smith (1977) then cautions us to realize that "language should not be said to have functions at all in the sense of having been designed or developed for specific purposes; rather it has persisted and developed over time for the simple reason that it adapts to so many useful ends" (p. 640).

About Language Functions

Any useful discussion about a functional view of language must of necessity include as Pinnell (1985) suggests "focusing on how people use language in their everyday lives to communicate, to present themselves, to find out about things, to give information, to negotiate and to interact" (p.58). What is important about language is what can be done with it, that is, how it functions in a world of people in an interactive context.

A child learns to communicate using language because of a need to participate and interact with others in the environment. Related to this assumption that language is developed to communicate with others, to understand what is meant by others and to communicate meaning to others is the notion that language is learned as a functional approach (Anderson, 1984). Language learning enables the child to participate and function effectively and fully in a meaningful way in the environment. While an understanding of the language characteristics at various stages of language development and insight into how various language elements are learned and integrated into a communicative whole are important, knowledge about the nature of language learning related to the function that language might serve as the child is developing, is equally critical.

Smith (1977) states that "children do not learn language as an abstract system, but as something they can use and understand in their interactions with the world around them" (p.638). Language learning is unlikely to occur in situations where there is no apparent utility. Mastery of some uses for language does not necessarily require that the child be familiar with all the possible uses to which language can be put, nor does an inability to use language for some purposes imply a lesser competence in langauge itself. Smith contends that language is a tool that has many uses.

Pinnell (1985) says that as children interact with others they gradually learn how to share their meanings and in doing so, they construct a set of beliefs and expectations about language. There is a direct relationship between language use and ensuing knowledge of language forms;

the more children use language, the more they learn about the words and patterns that enable them to accomplish their intentions. Pinnell (1985) applies the simple principle: form follows function. This notion is reinforced by Halliday (1973) as he points out that children do not learn language that they then apply to various functions but rather that they learn language as they learn its functions.

Learning Oral and Written Language

That form follows function has implications for understanding written and spoken forms of discourse since written and spoken language serve very different functions for the user. While written and spoken language functionally complement each other, they are in fact governed by different norms. Vachek (1973) elaborates:

> The spoken norm of language is a system of phonically manifestable language elements whose function is to react to a given stimulus (which, as a rule, is an urgent one) in a dynamic way, i.e., in a ready and immediate manner, duly expressing not only the purely communicative but also the emotional aspect of the approach of the reacting language user.
>
> The written norm of language is a system of graphically manifestable language elements whose function is to react to a given stimulus (which, as a rule, is not an urgent one) in a static way, i.e., in a preservable and easily surveyable manner, concentrating particularly on the purely communicative aspect of the approach of the reacting language user. (p. 11)

Although speaking, listening, reading and writing involve somewhat different contexts, they are based on similar language elements and linguistic structures and may be used for communication purposes. Language users employ both expressive processes (speaking and writing) and receptive processes (listening and reading). The processes are generally interactive in nature and communication is usually a two-way process to communicate meaning to achieve some end.

Oral language is usually learned first and makes use of immediate social situational contexts in conjunction with other significant language users. Immediate experiences are likely to form the basis between language and experience. Oral language development is enhanced by the use of intonation, facial expressions and physical gestures. While speaking and listening occur in a spatial direction using sound, oral language is not directly segmented into sounds but instead occurs in a rather rapid, informal manner. From this context, the listener and developing speaker are able to extract, abstract and differentiate significant features of oral expression.

Reading and writing , however, do not always occur in a direct social situational context with significant others. Nor are reading and writing always related to first-hand experiences. Lacking the direct interaction and feedback that is often inherent in the production and reception of oral communication, reading and writing are usually communication processes that occur over distance; the participants are not always communicating directly to one another. Reading and writing make use of certain conventions such as punctuation, letters, space and a linear direction; written language is segmented by spaces between letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs.

The Relationship Between Oral and Written Language

Goodman and Burke (1976) state that all aspects of language have three language systems, graphophonic, syntactic and semantic in common. Language, both oral and written, is an active process in the sense that readers and listeners and speakers and writers are each actively using their background knowledge of language and experience to ensure that comprehension occurs.

Goodman and Goodman (1977) maintain that differences between oral and written language result from differences in function than from any intrinsic characteristics. While any meaning may be expressed in either speech or writing, oral language tends to be used for face to face communication and written language to communicate over time and space. Oral language is likely to be supported by the context in which it is used, while written language is likely to be abstracted from the situations with which it deals. Written language usually includes more referents and creates its own context minimally supported by elaboration. Written language can be polished and rehearsed before it is presented and therefore has the potential to be more formal, deliberate and constrained than oral language might be.

Finally, Goodman and Goodman (1977) observe that oral and written language may differ more in how they are taught than in how they are learned. While most oral language development has already taken place before school entrance and is continually developing outside of school, the expectation for written language development is that it will occur in the context of school programs as a result of teacher instruction. As will be demonstrated in the present study, young capable writers demonstrate the use of integration strategies beyond the scope of classroom instruction and teacher expectations.

Some Other Classification Possibilities

The previous sections addressing both aspects of and the relationship between oral and written language are advanced to provide a fuller context within which to examine the various classification schemes that describe language functions. Some of these schemes are grounded in a functional view of oral language; others are based on a functional view of written language. Since it has been shown that there are some differences between oral and written language, it follows that attempting to explain functions of written language using a model generated by observations based on oral language may be inappropriate and inadequate.

Research on language use has produced several systems for classifying the functions of language. It is useful at this point then to consider other possible frameworks within which to view the present data. Categorical schemes that describe the function of language, written and oral, suitable to analysis of the present data, are provided by a number of authors. The proposed frameworks will be described and examined in an effort to determine the suitability of each of the schemes.

Halliday

Halliday's (1975) system for classifying language includes seven categories of language function, that define language according to its uses and the intentions of the child. He suggests that during the period extending from six months to eighteen months, the child makes use of each function separately and at later stages, the functions are generally integrated and employed together. The categories in Halliday's framework and their descriptions (Pinnell, 1985; Kolczynski, 1980) are as follows:

1. Instrumental: Instrumental language is used to communicate basic needs. The child attempts to get what is wanted, to satisfy needs or desires and to get things done. While at the early stages it may be concerned with satisfaction of basic needs, it forms the basis of requests and persuasion at a more sophisticated stage. Little intervention is needed to elicit instrumental language.
2. Regulatory: The regulatory function means using language to control the behaviour of others or, directed toward a particular individual, to get them to do what is wanted by the child. It may include giving orders or at a more subtle level, include manipulating and controlling others.
3. Interactional: Interactional language is used to establish and define social relationships. It may include negotiation, encouragement and expressions of friendships. Maintenance of social relationships may also be accomplished through the use of interactional language to establish relationships, work cooperatively and to enjoy companionship.
4. Personal: Personal language is used to develop and maintain the child's identity. Expressing individuality and personality, it may include language that expresses strong feelings and opinions.
5. Heuristic: Heuristic language is used to explore the environment, to investigate and to acquire knowledge and understanding. Speculation and prediction may result from using language in an heuristic manner to investigate, wonder about and figure out.
6. Imaginative: Imaginative language is used to create an environment of the child's own and to express fantasy through a variety of modes, including dramatic play, drama, poetry or stories.
7. Informative: Informative language is used to communicate information to someone who does not already possess that information. Representing what the child knows, reporting facts and drawing conclusions from facts are an integral part of language being used in an informative manner.

Smith

Frank Smith (1977), taking the perspective that "comprehension of language on any occasion is clearly related to comprehension of the use to which it is put" (p. 638), builds upon the framework advanced by Halliday (1973). He proposes the inclusion of three additional uses to which language may be put. Smith's expanded framework, with a brief description and example of the additional categories, is as follows:

1. Instrumental
2. Regulatory
3. Interactional
4. Personal
5. Heuristic
6. Imaginative
7. Representational
8. Divertive: Divertive language is language used for enjoyment of the user and/or an audience. The pleasure that accompanies the creation of puns, jokes, riddles, games and puzzles might typify language used in a divertive manner.
9. Authoritative/Contractual: This is meant to imply language that describes how things must be. Statutes, laws, regulations, agreements and contracts are examples of language used for authoritative functions.
10. Perpetuating: Perpetuating language is used to describe how things were. Language used for perpetuating functions might take the form of records, histories, diaries, notes and scores.

Wells

Gordon Wells (1973) identifies five large families of communication functions that comprise the dominant uses of communication in everyday life. The categories are intended to be interactive in nature, that is, the participant can be either a speaker or a listener. In any communication context, people both initiate and respond. The five communication functions are as follows:

1. Controlling: These are communication acts intended to control behaviour. Language used for controlling purposes may take the form of commands, suggestions, threats, warnings, persuasion or argument, among others.
2. Feeling: These are communication acts that express and respond to feelings and attitudes. Some examples of language used in this manner are expressing a state or an attitude, exclamations, teasing, challenges, apologies and congratulations.
3. Informing: These are communication acts intended to offer or seek information. Questioning, answering, justifying, naming, explaining and acknowledging comprise some of the uses of informing language.
4. Ritualizing: These are communication acts that serve mainly to maintain social relationships and to facilitate social interaction. Some examples are greetings, farewells, repetitions and taking turns in conversations.
5. Imagining: These are communication acts that cast the participants in imaginary situations and include creative behaviours such as role playing, fantasizing, speculating, dramatizing, theorizing and storytelling.

Tough

Joan Tough (1979), recognizing that language development is "entirely dependent upon the interaction children have with other people and the opportunities they have for using language to deal with everyday happenings" (p.21), proposes a classification system intended to describe what it is that a child does with language. Tough's classification scheme includes seven uses of language. They are as follows:

1. Self-maintaining: Self-maintaining language is language used to maintain the rights and property of the self. Referring to physical needs, protecting the self and self-interests, justifying behaviours or claims and criticizing or threatening others are examples of language used for self-maintaining functions.
2. Directing: This is language intended to direct the child's own activity and that of others. Directing language might take the form of monitoring one's own actions, directing the actions of self and others and collaborating with others.
3. Reporting: Reporting of past and present experiences comprise language used for this function. Some examples are labelling, referring to details, incidents or sequences, making comparisons and recognizing related aspects. Using language in a reporting function might also include analysis, extracting meaning and reflecting on the meaning of experiences and feelings.
4. Reasoning: Language is often used to express relationships within a particular experience or the underlying reasons for some course of action. Some examples of language used in a reasoning function are explaining, recognizing causes, problems or solutions,, and

justifying actions or judgements. Reflecting on events, drawing conclusions and recognizing principles also indicate language used for reasoning.

5. Predicting: This is language used to anticipate possibilities. Anticipating events, details, sequence and possible problems and solutions inherent in an event are examples of language used in a predicting manner. Anticipating and recognizing alternative courses of action and predicting the consequences of actions or events may also be served by the predicting function.
6. Projecting: This is language used to project into the experiences of others, including the feelings of others, the reactions of others and projecting into situations not yet experienced.
7. Imagining: This is language intended to develop imaginary situations based on real life or on fantasy. Developing an original story is an example of the use of imagining language.

Baghban

Marcia Baghban (1984), proposes that "children construct roles not only for the form of their written products, but also for various functions" (p. 3). As a result of observations about beginning writing, she offers a classification scheme within which to view the various uses that children make of language. Her functional typology is as follows:

1. Organization of what is known about the world and the operations of print: In this function, the child uses language to demonstrate knowledge about the environment. Cataloguing techniques such as copying and composing recipes, taking orders for meals, making lists and such comprise language used for the purpose of organizing what is known.
2. The maintenance of personal relations: This has to do with language that is used for social reasons. Notes to family members and birthday cards to friends are examples of language used for the maintenance of personal relations.
3. The establishment of impersonal contacts: This is also language used for social resons, but the audience is remote. Receipts and lost and found notices are given as examples of language used to establish impersonal contacts.
4. Personal needs: This category is intended to attempts to incorporate the emotional value of language. Expressions of personal needs and frustrations are examples of language used for personal needs.
5. Entertainment: This is language that is done for personal pleasure. It shares experiences with others and also includes the creation of imaginary situations.
6. Experimentation with what is in the process of being understood: Attempts to represent constructive linguistic processes such as cursive writing and other symbol systems are advanced as examples of language used for experimental purposes.

Limitations of Other Classification Schemes

Any optimal classification scheme must be able to accommodate all the data in categories that are exclusive and exhaustive; however, the daunting nature of such a task must be recognized. An early examination of the frameworks that were considered as adequate to accommodate the writing samples resulting from the present study indicated, at the proposal stage at least, that they might indeed be useful. As the analysis proceeded it became apparent that many of the above category systems were faulty because they were unable to accommodate certain samples from the data. Others were seen as too general to be of value when describing the writing that the participants had produced. Some writing did not easily fit into discrete categories. At the same time, some pieces of writing could be placed in more than one category simultaneously. And for others, no adequate descriptive category existed.

The following discussion addresses limitations of the previously described classification schemes in order to present a more useful category scheme within which to describe the present data. It is argued that those classification schemes are not useful, not because their underlying conceptual ground is faulty, but rather because they lack utility. They are not useful for providing a good fit between category and data in this study.

Halliday's (1973) category system is a developmental one, in which the child is characterized as developing ability to utilize the seven functions in a progressive way, over a period of time. Because Halliday's scheme describes oral language functions in the context of very early learning, it may be inappropriate to accommodate some of the writing arising from the present study. For example, writing that may be done by the child that is of an exploratory nature or done as a form of practice as shown in Figure 4 is not easily incorporated into Halliday's model. Similarly, writing that is done as part of a game, as shown in Figure 5 does not easily fit.

While Smith's (1977) scheme is essentially an expanded version of Halliday's framework, it is perhaps better suited to the interpretation of written language. The addition of three more categories by Smith allows the system to accommodate the previous example of the board game, but does not adequately deal with writing that is exploratory or experimental as shown in Figure 6. Similarly, a written piece, such as that shown in Figure 7 may be instrumental, regulatory and interactional simultaneously.

Wells' (1973) system proposes five broad categories of communicative functions, built on observations of oral langauage. As broad and all-encompassing as they are, the categories likely over-simplify functions and are too general to be useful. For example,the controlling function contains some 23 secondary uses and includes such seemingly disparate notions as wanting, threatening and justification. Similarly, while the category of ritualizing claims to be concerned with communication acts that are intended to maintain social relationships, Wells' examples do not account for the kind of writing seen in Figure 8 in which the child has written a love note.

Tough's classification scheme is another example of one that derives from oral language. Her scheme includes seven uses of language, with corresponding strategies that serve each category and reveal the child's reason for talking. There is some difficulty with this framework because the content of what is said is too often confused with intent and because inadequate attention seems to be given to context. Samples of writing, such as that illustrated by Figure 9 in which the child is demonstrating acquired knowledge, do not easily fit into Tough's scheme. Similarly, the distinctions among the categories of reasoning, predicting. projecting and imagining become somewhat hazy, perhaps too hazy to be useful. Tough's categories may be more general descriptions of language rather than summaries of its uses.

Baghban's typology is based on observations of beginning writing, and as such comes closest to being the most appropriate framework for interpreting a large number of samples of writing. Unfortunately the scheme is built upon a case of one and as a result does not fully accommodate the extensive range of writing samples evidenced in the present study. The category distinctions are perhaps too general, or at least lack adequate explanation, to be of utility. For example, one could argue that every time that a child writes the child is both exploring the operations of print and experimenting with what is being learned. The writing sample, shown in Figure 10 demonstrates written language used to permanently represent music notation and is not easily accommodated by Baghban's scheme. Likewise, writing that is of a transactional nature, that is , writing to get things done and exemplified by the request shown in Figure 11, is not adequately represented by Baghban's system.

An Additional Category Scheme

In demonstrating the inappropriateness of certain other frameworks designed to describe the functions of language, the intention is not to cast doubt upon their integrity. Each scheme was designed from the perspective that the conceptual framework best fit the data with which each of the researchers worked and the case for each framework seems legitimate in that context. Each scheme has something to offer the present data, yet each scheme does not fully accommodate the present data. Therefore, it seems appropriate to develop an additional framework for viewing the writing function data arising from the present study.

As has been demonstrated, category schemes are not without limitations. The proposed framework is not original because it is informed by and incorporates notions from other frameworks. As a result the proposed category scheme overlaps somewhat with each of the other classifications that have been presented and discussed. The intention was to develop a comparable typology that seemed to best fit the unique data of the present study and one that was suited to best describing the functions of written language as seen in the data of the present study.

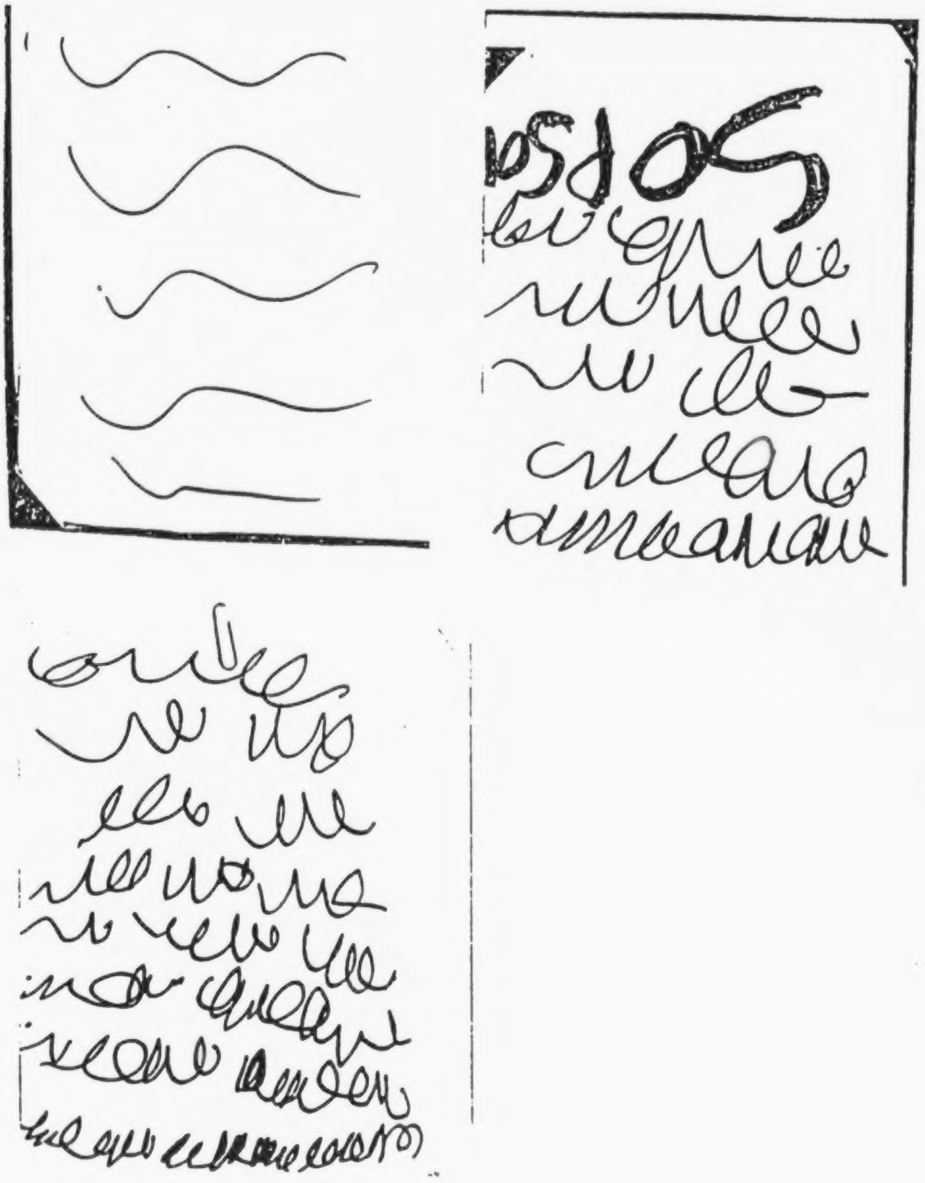


Figure 4. Heather's writing sample, number 84: Writing to explore print and to experiment with print form.

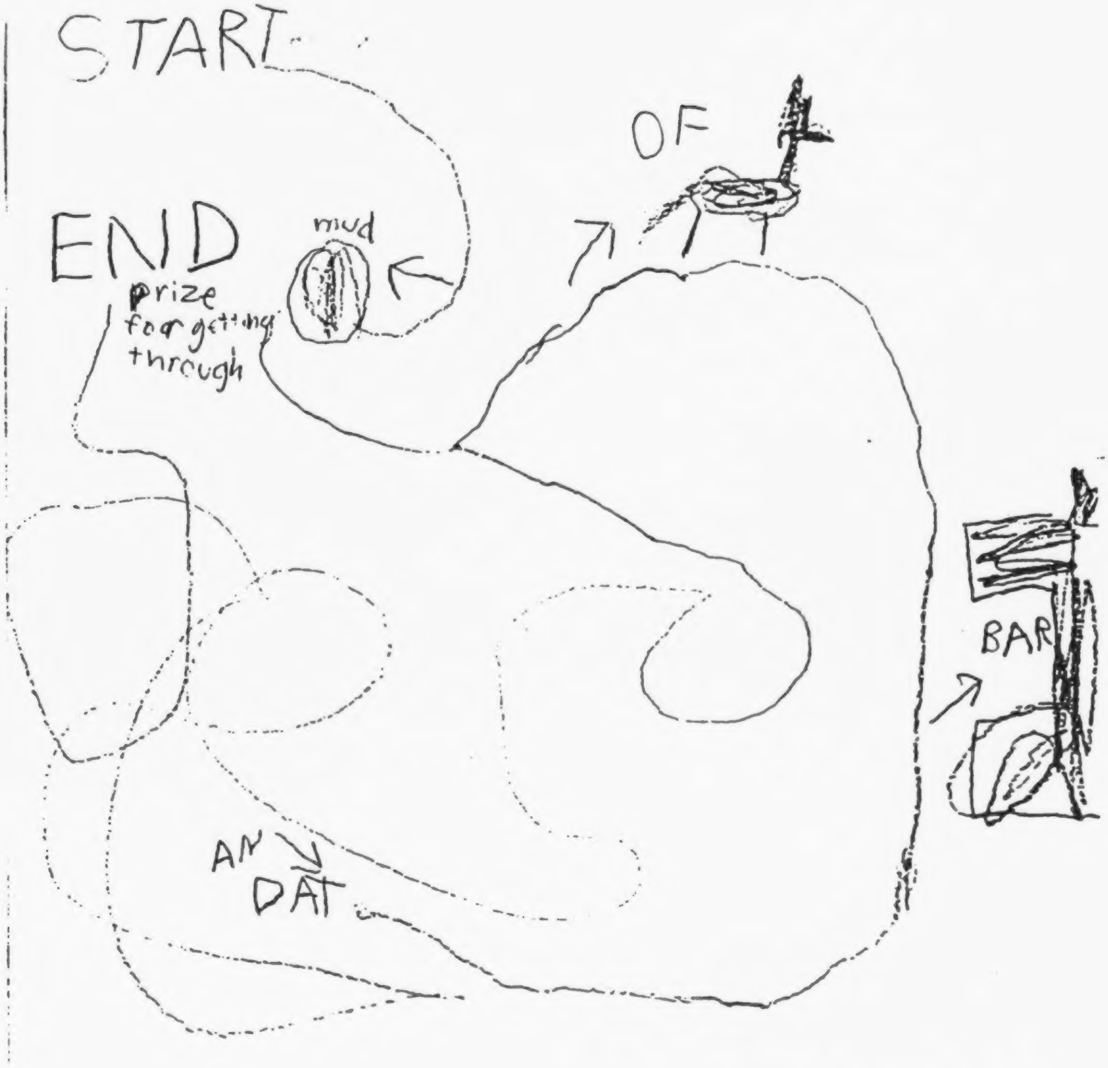


Figure 5. Adam's writing sample, number 3: Writing to challenge, to direct other's actions and to entertain.

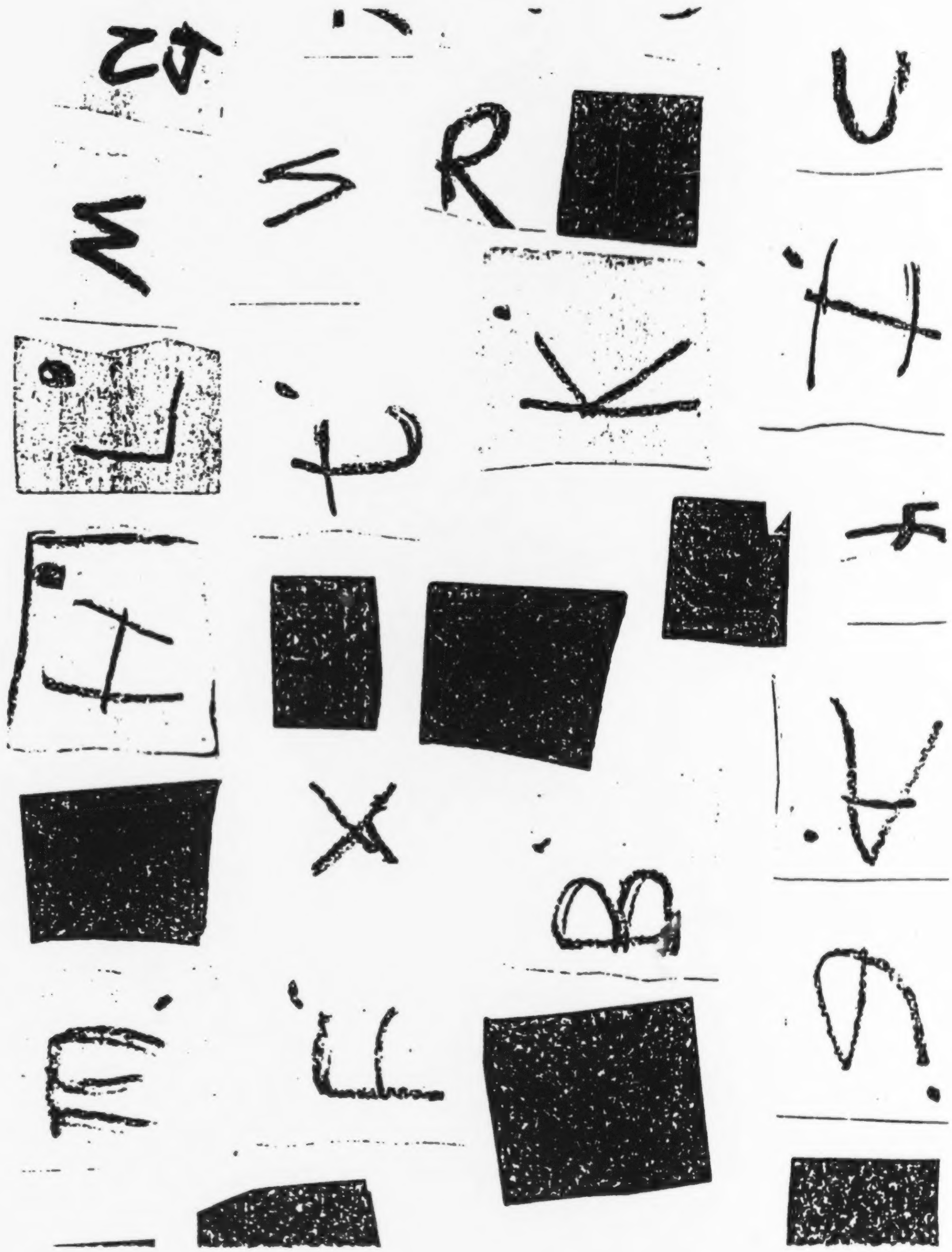
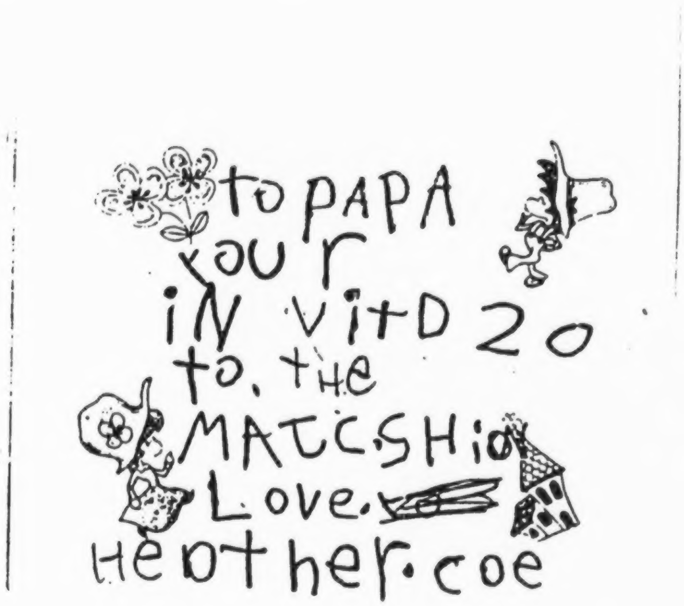


Figure 6. Avaleigh's writing sample, number 22: Writing to experiment with print, to challenge and to entertain.



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to. the
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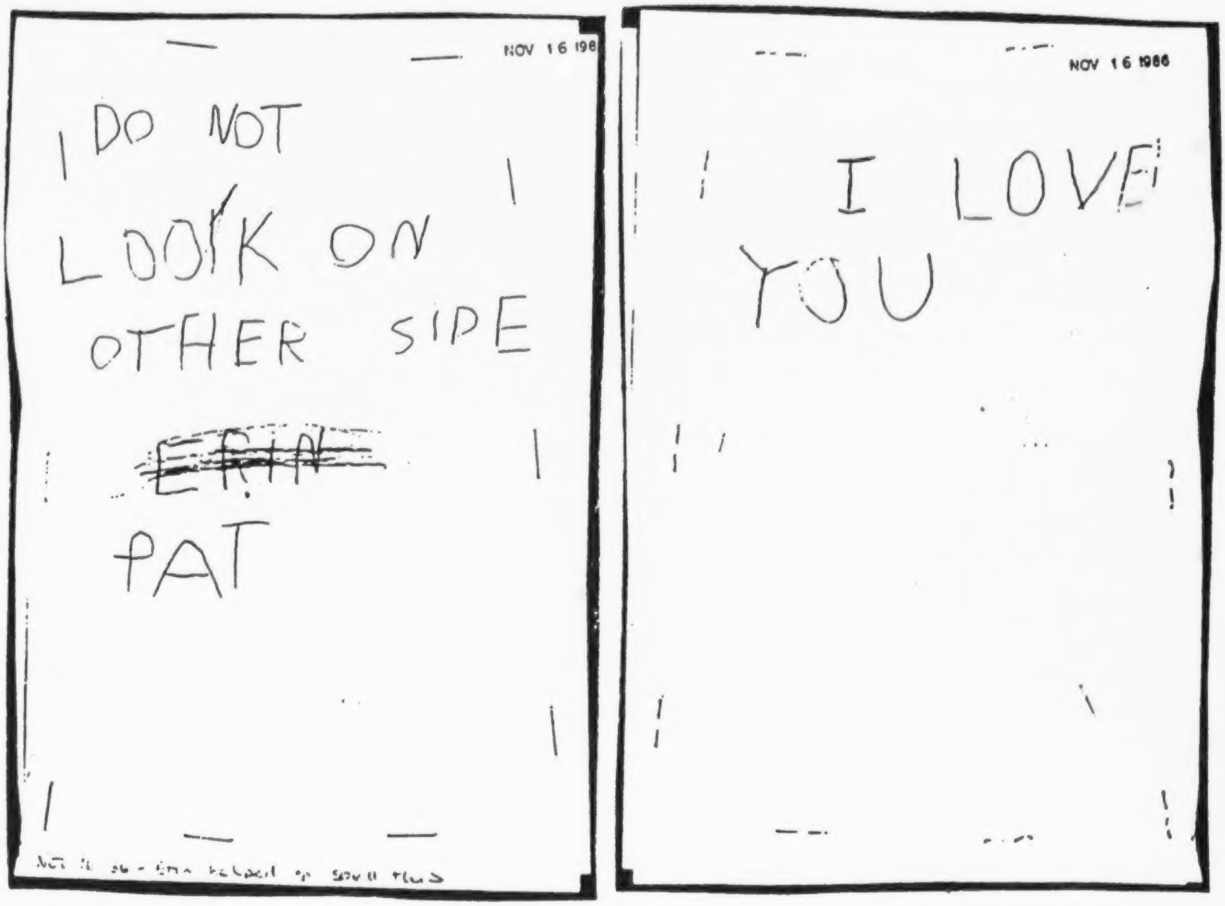
Figure 7. Heather's writing sample, number 9: Writing to maintain personal relations and to invite participation.



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I DO NOT LOOK ON OTHER SIDE

~~ERIN~~

PAT

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I LOVE YOU

Figure 8. Adam's writing sample, number 6: Writing to display affection and to direct or persuade.

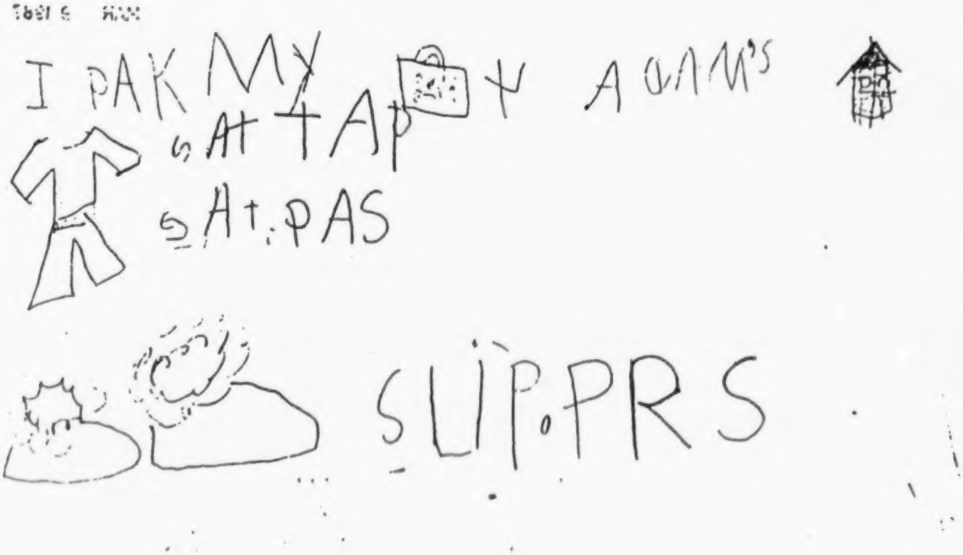

Figure 9. Heather's writing sample, number 111: Writing to organize and to plan.

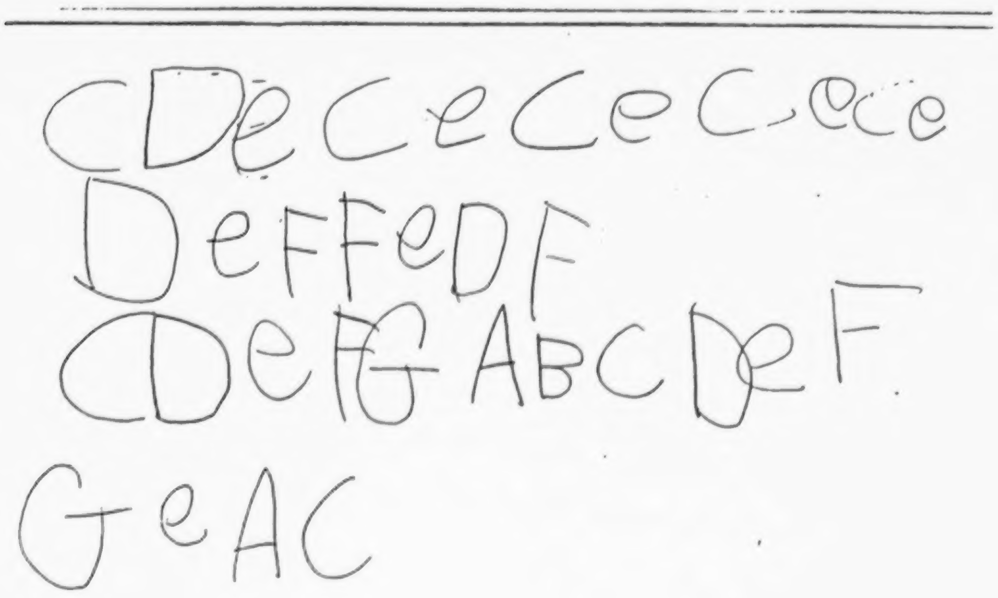
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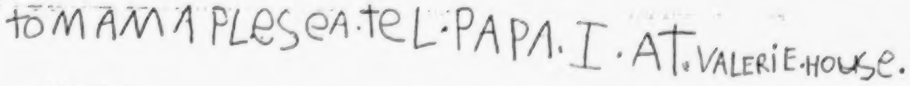
Figure 10. Heather's writing sample, number 4: Writing to experiment with print forms, to record information and to give directions.



tOMAMA PLeSeA·teL·PAPA·I·AT·VALERiE·HOUSe.

Figure 11. **Heather's writing sample, number 105:** Writing to make a request and to pass on information.

A Context for the New Scheme

Before beginning to describe such a scheme, it is worth pausing to reflect and couch the development of the neophyte function categories in terms of some general comments about taxonomies. While classification systems may prove useful in organizing thoughts about how language is used, it must be realized that they are only that: schemes to organize information. They will not always fit the real world. In addition, the functions of language are not discrete.

Smith (1977) makes several observations about functional typologies and claims that a "list can by no means be considered to be complete: indeed such a catalog would have to cover all of human psychology" (p. 639). Language use, he continues, is so varied that even an addition of ten times as many categories would not suffice to accurately describe language use; it would remain too simple a scheme. Language is not usually employed for just one use at a time and it is equally apparent that different language modes do not serve the uses equally well.

Classification schemes then, serve best to present data in as understandable and accessible a manner as possible. To accomplish that end with the present data, an additional scheme is proposed. The proposed function categories originate as a result of data analysis. That the study focuses heavily on contexts allows the following functions of writing to be advanced. They are, in no particular order:

1. Interactional
2. Social
3. Self Oriented
4. Representational
5. Informational
6. Knowledge Oriented
7. Experimental
8. Narrative

The typology is developed and described in Chapter Seven. In the meantime, it is necessary to present further analysis in order to develop a case, grounded in the present data, for an additional category scheme. What the children demonstrate that they know about the writing process is important to the development of the scheme, but more critical are the comments and insights that the parents offer regarding their child's writing. Their description of the various contexts within which writing occurs are crucial to the development of the additional category scheme. For these reasons, then, the final chapter is considered to be an appropriate place to describe the proposed function categories.

In the next chapter, the second of three that analyze the data, the child interview protocols are used as a starting point for discussion concerning both children's and parents' understandings about written language acquisition, as a number of influences in the writing environment of young children are explored.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS: CHILD INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

This is the second of three chapters that addresses the analysis of the data. In this chapter, and in the subsequent chapter, analysis and discussion go hand in hand as a myriad of influences in the writing environment of young children are explored. A number of issues relevant to children's understandings about written language are discussed.

Overview of Analysis

It is perhaps difficult to give an account or description without at the same time beginning to speculate somewhat about the nature and reasons for events and issues uncovered in the research. If information used from one study is to be used at another teaching site, with other children, then the most thorough description of contextual factors must be given. It is useful then to follow Goetz and LeCompte's (1984) suggestion that a written summary, outlining the major events and issues discovered in the course of the investigation, be used as a helpful organizing device. To that end, descriptions of comments, views and perceptions drawn from both interviews and discussions with children and parents in the context of writing samples, will be presented.

For presenting the interview data at least two possibilities were considered. The first was to identify broad based issues or themes and using supporting evidence from the transcripts.

to make a number of claims about those issues. A second possibility was to work through the transcripts chronologically, identifying, expanding and making claims about issues or themes as they were encountered. The former method implies some contextual deficiency; the latter was chosen because it preserves contextual integrity and complements the richness of the data.

A description of the proposed area of analysis and its application follows.

Significant Others

The nature and extent of adult influences on children's writing have been reported in the literature. Moss (1985), examining writing as a transaction among teachers and children, reports that teachers' instructional decisions may be the most important influence on children's writing processes in the classroom. Smith (1984) indicates that, contrary to popular belief, many young children can write well at the beginning of the school year; so the role of the teacher may be not to teach beginning writing but rather to nurture beginning writers.

Goodman (1980) contends that schooling has a significant impact on children's preschool language development, and it isn't always positive. Dyson (1982) notes that children sometimes make a distinction between writing at home and writing at school and says that for some children, experimenting with the writing process may be halted temporarily by beginning school. Piazza and Tomlinson (1985) suggest that children who engage in social interactions during drafting learn fundamental principles of how writing works.

Both parents and teachers exert a profound influence upon the development of young children. Since experimentation is an important aspect in the acquisition of written language, aware adults might be expected to focus on activities that promote natural language development.

It was felt that an analysis of the transcripts might provide patterns of information contributing to insights about parent acts or behaviours. What adults do in terms of modelling, intervention and support may have an effect on the kinds of writing that are produced. What adults communicate about perceptions, appreciations and expectations may likewise influence beginning writing.

It may be that writing environments that encourage talk can help children both to value the recursive nature of writing, that is, the on-going process of generating, clarifying and elaborating ideas and to discover operational truths about writing. Analysis of the data sought to provide an inter-related set of propositions that give rise not only to certain kinds of writing but also to how young children come to view the writing process.

In this section, the child interview protocols are used as a starting point for discussions concerning both children's and parents' understandings about written language acquisition. The strategies that children use to assist with their writing and their writing behaviour are examined. The question of how children make and test hypotheses as they develop knowledge about the writing process is addressed. Insights into how children perceive reading and writing relationships are entertained. The use of the interview schedule with the children provides some interesting perspectives on how they view adult writing and their own efforts. Since this study has as its referent children's written work, it seems reasonable to present the children's views and perceptions first in the present chapter, followed by the views of the parents in the next chapter.

What Does Avaleigh Know About Writing?

The description begins with questions and discussion designed to elicit information about the writing that Avaleigh does in several contexts, most notably at school and at home. As both Adam and Heather do, Avaleigh indicates that not much is happening at school in terms of writing. She says that some children do draw and others are busy at various activities. Her own efforts though are described as:

> I write my name most of the time.

As she begins to talk about the writing that she does at home, she indicates that there are some distinctions in both the kinds of things and the quantity of things that are done. While she does some colouring at home, she adds:

> I make alphabet books at home and I don't do that at school. I trace more things at home.

Writing is very personal to Avaleigh, as it likely is to all young children and when asked to identify topics about which she particularly enjoys writing, Avaleigh says that she is her favourite subject. An examination of her writing samples reveals that while she is not always the direct subject of each piece of writing, her picture and her name appear somewhere on many of her writings.

Avaleigh sees writing as a natural part of the home environment. In discussing the kinds of things that her mother and father do, she reports:

> She writes letters and birthday cards when it's my birthday and Christmas cards. I think he does some at work. He also writes cards.

Avaleigh is however, less certain that her teacher does any writing; she claims not to know. That Avaleigh is tentative about knowing whether her teacher indeed does write must be viewed with some caution. It may be that Avaleigh's developing definition of what constitutes writing, does not yet include the sorts of things that teachers actually do in classrooms. It may also be that the teacher does no writing in what might be termed an instructional sense.

The question of just what children need to know and learn in order to become writers is addressed. Avaleigh suggests these initial skills as requisite:

> How to draw letters; how to spell the words.

Just how one might come to learn those skills is indicated by Avaleigh when she says:

By watching other people.

Just as Dyson (1982) relates that young children, when joining a play situation, begin to do what their peers are presently doing, so too may young children behave as they enter into literacy. They do as they observe others doing.

It seems that there is a distinction. albeit a subtle one, to be made between natural literacy development and formal literacy training. Reading and writing are part of the world of children (Goodman and Goodman, 1983). Holdaway (1979) stresses that being able to observe written language being used by members of the child's community is critical to developing understanding of it. Tway (1982) adds that writing can only be seen as important if it is indeed seen. Fortunately, children do play at what grown-ups do.

However, Avaleigh attributes the responsibility for knowing how to write not to her teacher or the school situation, but instead to her parents. She observes:

I think that my mum and dad taught me.

However, it may not be so much a matter of having been actually taught by her parents as having had ample opportunity around the home to note the functions and uses of written language in a literate context. Perhaps this is not so true of school situations.

Avaleigh offers an initial account of her spelling and writing practices. While she, as do the other children in the study, turns to members of her family for spelling assistance, she is developing independent strategies. Of her practice she says:

> I just sound it out. Like I put a couple of letters together at a time. then I sort of sound them out at the same time and then I put some more letters together with that, and then some more with that and some more to that and go on until I get to the end of the word.

From this account it is possible to speculate that the child does indeed construct hypotheses about written language that are then refined over time. It can be seen that Avaleigh is constantly testing the hypotheses that she has developed about how written language ought to work. It is not hit and miss but a deliberate series of moves or decisions to arrive at what she considers to be the correct spelling. When she gets to the point of correctness, she applies her criterion for knowing whether she has chosen the right letter. She offers the following reason:

> 'Cause they sound right.

Freeman and Whitesell (1985) state that children are constantly making hypotheses about written language as they interact with their print-rich environment and that these hypotheses do not necessarily follow the conventional rules that adults use. On one occasion, while Avaleigh is reading one of her writing samples, she pauses as she has difficulty reading it. She realizes that there is a misspelling and that the misspelling has affected the readability of the material. She demonstrates her developing awareness of the need for correct convention when she muses:

> Um, what's that E doing there?

Avaleigh was asked to imagine that she were the teacher and to indicate the sorts of things that would have to be taught in order to help children to learn to write. She outlines the necessary skills and the order in which they would be acquired:

> First I would show you how to put letters if you didn't know. And after that I would teach you how to sound out the words.

It is appropriate to pause here in order to examine more closely a number of assumptions that are inherent in this statement. Avaleigh indicates that a working knowledge of the alphabetic system is the first critical element that must be mastered. The second necessary element concerns an understanding of the grapheme-phoneme relationship that exists among letters and sounds.

The question becomes one of whether these understandings arise as a result of natural literacy acquisition in her environment or whether they are the result of instructional practices. What is clear is that for Avaleigh, writing involves active construction, and not copying from models. In any event it appears that writing is not copying a model. Avaleigh further adds that it would not be necessary to know how to read before learning to write. She recalls the reason for this from her personal experience:

Write. I knew how to write first because I don't know how to read that well now.

Unlike Adam, as will be seen, Avaleigh need not be so tentative about her ability to read. There are many instances during the study when Avaleigh engaged in reading her writing and she does indicate that re-reading, as she is writing, is a part of her practice. She reads, but only under specific circumstances. She says:

If I know what they say.

One of the difficulties in properly assessing whether or not children engage in reading as a monitoring process for their writing is that in the present study there were no provisions to observe children actively involved in the process of writing. The issue is made more complex when the question of whether or not children are even aware of the fact that they may use reading as a cognitive monitoring strategy is raised. Hemming (1986) reports that the use of reading as a monitoring strategy is dependent to a large extent on the writing contexts. Bissex (1986), as a result of preliminary work in this area, cites what she terms "stages" of reading that seem to accompany writing. As children begin to make reading and writing connections, they not only read while writing, but re-read after writing. As they develop as critical readers, children become aware of the importance of conventions to enhance readability and begin to read written material taking into account an external audience. This notion eventually comes to be valued and internalized as part of writing practice.

Avaleigh is aware of some differences between child and adult writing. She observes that it has a different form:

> When grown-ups are finished writing and I see it, it kind of looks like they are scribbling.

She also distinguishes it in terms of just how one might refer to it. Adult writing and her efforts have different names. She says:

They write and they don't print and I print and I don't write.

In fact at the beginning of the study Avaleigh made it quite clear that she could not write; she could only print. She indicates:

> I can't write; I can just print.

She elaborates this distinction between printing and writing by referring to examples at hand:

> That is printing (pointing to her own work) and that is writing (pointing to research notes).

The criterion that she gives for making this distinction is one that is concerned with form. She offers:

> 'Cause that has letters and that has scribbling.

Regardless of the name given to writing, Avaleigh knows that another critical element in learning to write is practice. Avaleigh begins to offer some information about the connections between reading material and the source of ideas for her writing. She attributes her ability to name letters to having worked with alphabet books. Occasionally though, Avaleigh makes use of print material available in the environment and does not hesitate to use copying as a writing strategy. As well as copying, she also traces from books. The following comments illustrate such occasions. Avaleigh explains:

> I traced that from a book. They were in the alphabet book too.

and:

> I don't know how to write them; I copied them. From books and stuff. I knew how to spell I LOVE YOU.

and:

> That was all the stuff we needed. That's my list that I copied from there on to here. Mum did those and I copied them on to that.

It is abundantly clear in Avaleigh's case that she is actively involved in learning to read and write. The notion that children expect written language to be meaningful is quite legitimate. A fascinating example, in support of this claim is provided by one noteworthy piece of writing. Avaleigh has drawn some musical notes, some on staffs, others not. When asked if this type of graphic representation could be read, she replies:

> I can read them in my book, but not when I draw them because I don't know what notes they are. They are all the same, except that they are different sizes.

What a marvellous bit of reasoning. Not only does she know that certain writing can be read, but she also knows when certain pieces cannot be read. Taken out of their context, the notes simply remain mute; they can make no sense as reading material.

It is perhaps fitting to return to Dyson (1983) and Goodman (1985) to bring to a close the observations of Avaleigh's composing by way of one more intriguing piece of writing. Avaleigh has created a series of alphabets, each letter done on a small separate piece of card. The pile of the letters contains more than one complete alphabet. The challenge, as Avaleigh explains, is to put the letters in order, to create the sequence of the alphabet. But, to complicate matters, there are many numbers in the same pile. These have to be distinguished amd sorted accordingly. Chomsky (1979) suggests that letter names provide children with a first link between oral and written words. The little task that Avaleigh has devised is indicative of the independent efforts in which some children engage in order to make sense of the written language system.

But as Dyson (1982) cautions, the written language puzzle is a complex one and as with most puzzles, children cannot solve it by being given only one piece at a time.

What Does Adam Know About Writing?

The description begins with questions and discussion designed to elicit information about the writing that Adam does in several contexts, most notably at school and at home.

Adam reports that he does very little writing at school. He claims to have completed only one piece of writing while at school, done a considerable time ago. The stimulus for the writing was a post office theme developed across the grades. The writing itself consisted of correspondence to his sister, the content of which was dictated and copied. The letters are properly formed and the spelling is correct. The form and content of the piece differ from the samples of writing collected at home. He does indicate, about writing at school, that:

> We have books for pictures.

This may be a reference to a prevalent teacher practice whereby children are asked to draw a picture in a blank "diary" and then invited to tell a story about their picture. Once related by the child, the story is condensed and written down for the child to copy. Adam mentions the books for pictures but does not speak of writing or dictation in them.

It may be argued that the practice of having children copy dictation is a good instructional activity, one that is designed to help children learn to control the reading-writing process. Often though, rather than transcribe what children actually say, teachers condense, changing the language pattern and controlling the complexity of syntax used by the child. A potential difficulty, as Harste and Burke (1980) argue is that the significant creative decisions related to the written language have been made by the teacher.

When asked about the writing that he does at home, Adam immediately refers to books that he has made. While books for him constitute the most easily recalled kind of writing that he does, they represent a small proportion of the total kinds of writing that he does at home. Adam also identifies stories as one of the things about which he particularly enjoys writing. All of his attempts at story writing are done in book format.

While Adam does not know the precise nature of the kinds of writing that his parents might do, he is nevertheless exposed to a considerable amount of writing occurring at home. He states:

> Yea. I see them doing it all the time.

This is in sharp contrast to Adam's views of the writing done by his teacher. He observes that she does no writing:

> She's not the one who writes in our classroom; Mrs. Helper (the non-teaching assistant) does.

Adam has an extremely positive view of his reading and writing abilities. When asked whether he considered himself to be a good writer, he responds positively, offering the following criteria:

> 'Cause everything I write I can understand after about a year. If I took it out and tried to read what it was, I'd know in about two seconds.

His comments serve to support claims (Heald-Taylor, 1984) that young children are able to re-read and match scribble to story for a considerable time after the writing. But it is not just a matter of remembering what it is that he has written. Adam offers an interesting distinction from this view of beginning reading as memory work. His view is one of active construction versus passive recollection. When it is suggested that his ability to remember enables him to read what he has written, Adam responds:

> Actually, I just make out the sounds.

He then proceeds to expand the criteria for being a good writer. These now include practice. However, practice requires certain basic knowledge and skills. Of what constitutes practice he details:

> First what I had to know is what sounds letters made. And really, I have to know how to put different sentences away from each other. Like make which is one sentence and which is another.

Adam indicates his beginning awareness of the necessity of certain conventions, in particular spacing between words, when he offers a very pragmatic rationale for them:

> I wouldn't know after a long time. If I forgot them, I wouldn't be able to read.

Adam is asked to imagine that he is a teacher, and as such, to articulate the things that children would need to know to become better writers. Adam reports that both phonic knowledge and sentence structure are important.

> Well, you know, what things to take them apart like I know. Just everything I've just told you what I practice on. I'd tell you what sounds things make and how to take them apart.

His advice covers not only necessary skills to learn to write, but also includes several suggested practices for those who would help children with their writing. If a spelling were needed, he would:

> Write it down and let you copy.

And should the writer run short of ideas, he advises:

> I would tell you a few things that you might want to write.

Adam claims not to know anything about adult writing, yet he offers a number of insightful observations about the kinds of things that adults do. Feeling that adult writing differs in some respects from the sorts of things that he does, Adam hints at what might be described as a continuum view of development, albeit a complicated path. Adam observes:

> Yea, except it's easier to understand a bit; They usually write it a different way.

Not only is it easier for adults to understand, but it is also physically more manageable. Adam notes:

> Well, it must be easier cause then you never have to take it (pen) off the paper.
> You just make lines all around.

He notes a discrepancy however, between rule governing systems; grown-up writing follows slightly different conventions than the system that he has developed and indeed is developing. In fact, it could be argued that his perceptions each constitute a new bit of learning that is contributing to his whole developing view of literacy and writing development. As children compose, for example, they are seen to engage in a number of strategies such as whispering sounds, reading, editing and self-correcting. It is as though the child were comparing the product with an internal plan. Moreover, children confront contradictions as they attempt to make sense of written language and doing so creates cognitive conflicts that promote learning (Sulzby and Teale, 1985). Adam indicates that he has yet to learn the strategies that enable an adult to write and to read their writing. It must be easier for adults because as he observes:

> Some letters that they sound like aren't right and some of those things I don't know about.

The source of adult writing ideas is the same source tapped by children, with one notable exception. Adam observes:

> Same as I do. Think it up. They wouldn't ask other people what to write.

Again, pragmatics form the basis for his perceptions of adult practice. He reasons that adults would not have to ask other adults for ideas, because somehow they are the source of ideas for children and must be an absolute source of knowledge about writing. Adam reasons that children ask to tap into this source of wisdom:

> The same as a kid asking them, asking an older person. Get more things in their head.

Adam recounts his early memories of learning to write. It is interesting at this point to note the confidence that Adam has in his ability as a beginning writer. The fact that he can recall, at the ripe age of five, memories of learning to write, indicates the positive attitude that he has to learning. He offers a view of his development as a writer, in terms of products produced. Adam recalls:

> That was when I was about three when I was starting. Well, some of the first things I did were stories. Sometimes I made books a bit. But I didn't have the idea of maps yet.

The map refers to a number of things that he has done as part of pretend or make-believe play, when writing has always accompanied an ongoing activity in which he is engaged. It is curious that he regards this writing to be in a more developmentally prominent position.

Adam offers an interesting account of himself as a learner. Writing for beginners is a difficult chore. Of his written work he observes:

> I think for people who are just learning, it's real hard. It's pretty hard. Like it's pretty hard for me to do even this good on it.

Adam indicates that as he gets older his writing will approach adult convention; of this there is little doubt. He asserts:

> I'll start to get closer and closer to what Erin writes. And then some time I'll just be the same as she is now.

Adam shows that he has an awareness that written language can have a variety of purposes. While examining a piece of writing that is a collection of random letters, Adam distinguishes between writing that is practice and writing that might have an intended message:

> I wrote that all down. It doesn't really say real things. All it is is practising on writing. Cause I wanted to learn how so that after Christmas I can tell you stuff.

While the piece is only practice, it is nevertheless purposeful practice. Vygotsky (1986) asserts that cognitive growth occurs as the child comes to understand and use written language. Writing development, he contends, does not follow a linear path of conversion from one stage to the next. Rather, development of writing performance ought to be viewed as an accumulation of various forms (understandings) of written language. Variety (inconsistencies) in a young child's writing signify that the child is ever testing hypotheses about the function of written language.

This random letter practice is unique among the samples of writing that Adam produced during the study and shows several things. Adam clearly understands that writing represents the ideas and concepts that people have because he indicates quickly that the random letters are not to be read. As well he knows something of the nature of the relationship between writing and reading and that is, as Freeman and Whitesell (1985) observe, that reading is not simply deciphering.

Goodman (1985) contends that one of the functions of written language concerns the child's needs for written language. In a discussion of a story in book form that Adam has written, he reports what led to his decision to write the book. He has learned that writing can be used so that something won't be forgotten when he reasons:

> Well, I just wanted to remember it.

On other occasions, the function of writing is to practice or to demonstrate ability or knowledge as Adam explains:

> I just wrote it 'cause I knew how to write.

He begins to offer an account of just how he goes about writing and how he is able to do the things that he does. He offers insights into his strategies for spelling and his practices for writing. His initial account is as follows:

> I do it with my own sounds. 'Cause I know what letters make what sounds and then I just figure out the way to write and make it the way I think it goes and then I can read it myself and then mum can usually read it.

He elaborates his spelling strategies:

> I just got the sounds in my mind and I just made the letter that makes the sound. I just thought of the sounds and put whatever letter made that sound down.

However, Adam indicates that his knowledge of spelling is not static, but continually developing. If, as Harste and Burke (1980) propose, each instance of written language use confronts the language user with some problems to be solved, Adam must generate and test new hypotheses. That he is indeed engaged in this process is evident in his further explanation of his spelling strategies:

> Well, I just know the sounds that the letters make and then I put the sounds together and if it doesn't sound right, I'll use the other sounds some letters can use to see if that's okay. And if that doesn't sound like it then, I'll just use other letters.

From this account it can be seen that the child does indeed construct hypotheses about wtitten language and refine them over time (Jacobs, 1985). Adam has begun with the hypothesis that a sound symbol relationship will give him the correct spelling, but as he observed in his earlier comments about the nature of grown-up writing and as he presently indicates in the preceding account, he has begun to test the hypothesis that something else is operating in written language other than sound to symbol correspondence. Elaborating on this knowledge he offers:

> Some letters have two sounds. Like T even has TUH and TH TH. (Adam makes the sounds). And C has a couple of sounds too. It goes CUH (Adam makes the sound) and what's the other one? Yea, S. S makes that sound too. And S can also go TH too. (Adam makes the sounds).

Not only does he apply this developing knowledge to work in progress, but he also uses it to assess what he has already written. He indicates one of his self-correction strategies when he says:

> Sort of a map I made. That (pointing to a specific letter) used to be a wrong letter, but so I just made it big so you could see it.

Although Adam is making great strides toward understanding the nuances of the written language and is quite confident of his developing ability, it does not prevent him from soliciting assistance. When he needs help, he turns to family members. Dictation is a part of his practice. Unlike classroom practice however, Adam does not have to copy the dictated writing. About the writing of a story in book form he says:

> This part I wrote all that and then the rest I told mum and dad what it was.

Adam indicates the specific sort of help that he receives from his mother when he explains:

> Sometimes I forget the sound something makes and I don't know what to put to make that sound. I just ask her and she says what makes that sound and I just put it down. I figured out till here and then I asked if there was any more letters to it and mum said there was. I asked her what was the other letter and she said the last one is R.

What is noteworthy about the parent practice is that his mother's help remains tentative and distanced; it is as though she were trying to provide assistance, yet leave as much of the writing as possible in Adam's control. When parents are busy, Adam readily turns to his nine-year-old sister for help. On one occasion she was the source of help when he was making a surprise card for his mother.

It should be apparent by now that Adam, while developing awareness of written language, is also beginning to wonder about how it is organized in order to communicate. He realizes that written language takes certain forms, has spelling conventions, and is governed by syntactic and semantic rules. In a discussion about a book he had attempted, Adam indicates his understanding that writing a story requires some considerable space. His book contains eight pages on which to write, but more interestingly he has begun to write the story in very small, tightly packed print. That he anticipates a story to be long and that he has made some tentative format plans are indicated by his explanation:

> It was going to be a story of Peter and the Wolf. I've got part of it done already. That's sort of all. It takes up a lot of space though too. I'd write maybe until here and then I'd draw a picture down here.

The more that children use written language that makes use of punctuation for purposes that make sense to them, the greater their control over punctuation becomes (Goodman, 1985). In one particular piece of writing, directions to the zoo, Adam has placed dots between each of the words in the sign. Realizing the need for some conventions, he explains that the punctuation marks are needed for readability:

> They're for different sentences, not sentences. Like you say them apart, like GO - TO - THE - ZOO. (Adam emphasizes the spacing with a tap of his fingers). And you put a little dot in between each different set of words and that means stop.

Jacobs (1985) muses that children do not know how they know, but somehow they know that stories have conventional beginnings. On one occasion, when Adam wished to demonstrate his beginning reading ability, he remarked that a book had an odd beginning; it did not follow the traditional storybook opening. Because the book began in this odd way, it did not fit his criterion of making sense. He explains:

> Because it doesn't make sense when it says KITTY PUT ON HER CLOTHES. That doesn't make sense really. Well, it just doesn't sound right. It doesn't sound like a story.

Teale (1982), exploring the question of how children learn to read and write naturally, emphasizes that story and picture book reading episodes, while initiated by adults, eventually become an integral part of the child's literate competencies. If the stories and books that Adam has written or attempted are examined, it is readily seen that they all have their origins in story reading events or are related to books he has read or had read to him as part of his personal literate life. These earlier reading and later writing events have become significant aspects of his developing literacy. Holdaway (1979) reports that children's enactments of familiar story books that they have previously experienced in interactive situations with parents or siblings, serve to develop several aspects of their abilities in reading and writing. Comments such as the following indicate the typical source of ideas for the books that Adam has written:

> It's the one grandma and grandpa have, "The Stolen Rocket". It's not all of it, just parts I could write, but it still sounds good.

and:

> I remember last time I did (stayed over night at a friend's house), we watched a movie of "The Never Ending Story" and it made me think maybe I could write a book of it.

and:

> We brought a book from the library called *Prince Jupiter and the Moondogs*. I just remembered. I just thought of it when I did read it and made it up. But I didn't make the part where all the moondogs got trapped and had to be left behind.

and:

> You know what? I was playing Rumplestiltskin and so I wrote Rumplestiltskin. I got it from the library. I'm just copying 'cause I have it at home right now.

When asked if a knowledge of reading was necessary to being able to write and which process, writing or reading, was learned first, Adam indicates that he is learning to write first and that he expects reading to follow:

> Write. 'Cause after I learn how to write, then I'll start learning how to read.

It is odd that Adam should be skeptical of his ability to read since he demonstrates time and time again and in a rather convincing manner that he is capable of reading things that he has written. Perhaps, the criterion that Adam applies is one of gauging ability from the perspective of commercial print materials. Or perhaps it is as Jacobs (1985) suggests, that children do not know when they learn such things and that they learn without being aware of it. Reading and writing do have an impact on each other. Goodman and Goodman (1983) state that it is impossible to write without reading; writers must read and reread during writing.

In any event, Adam has been a user of written language for a considerable amount of time and as such has come to expect that written language will be meaningful. As Harste and Burke (1980) contend, it is through having encountered words in reading that Adam is able to fine tune his writing strategies. What lies ahead for Adam may continue to be as delightful as it is surprising.

What Does Heather Know About Writing?

Heather describes the writing that goes on at school as a regular part of school life. She states that writing does occur and provides much more detail about the sorts of things that she, the other children and the teacher do. She speaks of her own efforts in these terms:

> Drawing, and just writing (separately) or writing and drawing (on the same page).

Heather mentions that she does use writing by itself, without an illustrative accompaniment. The other children in the class are seen to be engaged in similar sorts of activity except that:

> They mostly do drawing writing.

This, she explains, is:

> Just drawing, but some of them do writing and some do both.

Discussing what she does at home in writing, Heather begins to indicate that there are some differences between home and school. Heather reports that she does most of her writing at home and makes some distinctions among products done in each context. She also says that while she does not write each day at school, she nevertheless would write daily if she were to stay home. In fact, Heather writes daily at home. Of the writing at home she observes:

> Same things as at school but most of the time, I have much more time at home. Pictures, but sometimes I do some things different-- letters and invitations.

Heather gives some initial indications of just how she arrives at ideas to write about. She gives what seems to her to be a perfectly reasonable answer to the question of how she decides. Heather offers:

> Think. Your brain. Don't I have a brain? Think them up.

While initially an amusing comment, it does give some insight into the potential difficulty in designing appropriate questions and reliable methodologies for uncovering knowledge about certain issues from children. From her perspective, the notion of the brain as an idea source seems to be logical.

To elaborate what she has in mind, she offers an example in the context of an imagined piece of writing that she might do. That she would seek to extrapolate an example drawn from her real experience is fascinating and indicates several significant things about Heather's thinking. While she cannot fully answer a question about the source of ideas, she nevertheless realizes that her previous answer is incomplete and needs clarification. It also indicates that to be able to use an example of a piece of writing not yet done, to be able to project, must mean that Heather has at her disposal a considerable amount of knowledge about the writing process and written language. She clarifies her schema for the source of ideas by explaining:

> Think of something that you really want to draw.

Heather is reasonably aware of her writing abilities. In a discussion concerning her use of writing as part of play activities, Heather indicates that when she is for example, playing house, she does do some writing. She describes her efforts in this manner:

> Playing house or something. Yes, pretend writing. Just scribbly writing, but sometimes I do real writing.

Heather understands written language to the extent that she has at her disposal more than one kind of expressive form. Depending on the purpose of the writing activity, she can choose the form that the writing might take. About times other than when she is playing she observes:

> When I just don't know what to draw I do scribbly writing.

Perhaps what is hinted at here is the use of writing as a mental place holder, something to make at least the idea concrete, prior to it being put into some other written form. The place holding may be long or short enough to permit Heather to think further about what might next be included in the piece of writing, or may supplant the eventual necessity for any further writing at all.

Having made the distinction between scribbly writing and real writing, Heather proceeds to elaborate this differences:

> Because it's just like--it's twirly the pretend writing. (She demonstrates with looping motions of her finger). But the real writing is just apart or together. (She demonstrates by doing straight lines with her finger). But I usually do it apart.

The relationship between the two kinds of writing is made clearer in the context of a functional criterion. Heather says that scribbly writing cannot be read, but the same does not hold true for real writing. Indicating her developing awareness of the need for some convention in writing, in this case that of spacing for readability, she observes using reading ability as a criterion:

> With spaces in between or something? In between each letter? Yes. The way I write my name? Yes. I know how to read it.

As with Avaleigh and Adam, Heather sees writing as part of her home environment. It is a natural part of the literacy that she encounters in her daily life and she can recall several instances of writing that her parents do. Her mother uses writing when she goes shopping or writes letters; her father writes letters, lists and uses writing in connection with his teaching. Of the writing that her teacher does, she is less certain and her account of teacher writing is slim.

On two occasions during the study, Heather begins to give an account of the kinds of things that children would need to know to learn how to write. She indicates the skills that must be mastered as well as the order in which they ought to be acquired. It is interesting to speculate if the order in which children indicate that skills ought to be learned reflects the actual way in which the skills are acquired, or the unique order in which the children learned them. Perhaps it represents the instructional order in which skills are introduced by the teacher. Or it may simply be the order in which it makes most sense for the child to put the skills for the purposes of relating them to another person. Her account begins:

> First how to write: but first you have to learn your numbers. First their numbers, then their alphabet and then they try to sound out words.

Heather clarifies her use of the term numbers by explaining that:

Like numbers are sort of words. Oh yea, A B C.

As she is giving details about the necessary knowledge of which children need to be aware, Heather integrates the criterion of meaning inherent in written language attempts, and once again speaks in terms of writing's relationship to reading. That the writing is readable to the writer is all-important She elaborates:

> First their numbers, then their alphabet and then they try to sound out words, even though they're not right, the little kid can read it and if they were doing it in pencil, you could erase it and your mum would help you or the teacher.

This relates to what Heather does with respect to her own practices in writing. She indicates that she sounds out words when she writes and that she does not always spell words correctly. Once again, using readablity as the criterion, she explains that incorrect spelling is not a problem because both her mother and she can read it. Offering an initial account of the strategies that she uses to assist her with her writing, Heather attributes her ability to write to the help provided by an interested adult:

> I learned how to write from mummy helping me, mummy telling me the words and soon I'll know them. Soon I knew them. Like RED--that was easy to remember.

It is interesting that she does not credit school as the source of knowledge about written language; however, some caution must be exercised regarding literal interpretations. Heather indicates from the comment that she is extremely optimistic of future success in learning. Her main criterion for developing writing ability she explains, is:

Just practice. A bit more practice; more practice would help me learn how to write.

When she spells, Heather says that she applies both independent and dependent resources:

> I sound them out or I ask mummy. If I tried to sound out YELLOW. I would do YUH ELL LL O. YELLOW. (She sounds out and pronounces each sound deliberately).

She reports that copying from a secondary source is also in her repertoire:

> And also if I'm copying a book and I'm trying to read the book too and write it down and if I get into something mistakey, so I sound it out or ask mum.

Discussing what might constitute good writing and how children became good writers, Heather claims that she is not a good writer or that at least she is unsure of how well she writes. These seem to be peculiar statements from a child who to this point has demonstrated that she already possesses a considerable wealth of knowlege about the processes of written language. The comments take on more relevance when Heather articulates the criteria that lead her to believe that her writing does not measure up in some respects to the standard that she has set for what constitutes legitimate good writing. Someone would be a good writer, she explains:

> Because they would be having real scribbly writing and things like that and I also know that you are a good writer.

Real scribbly writing in this case refers to adult cursive writing. Heather claims not to know about the nature of adult writing and when asked to relate what she knows about grown-up writing, responds:

> No, but you can because you are a grown-up. I don't know. You're a grown-up; you know.

However, in further discussion, she reveals that she is aware of some differences. Adult writing differs with respect to content. The form that adults use is also different than what children might employ. Writing for adults is a much easier undertaking because they have had much more practice doing it. Grown-ups also have no shortage of ideas.

Assuming the role of the teacher, Heather describes the form that her assistance with writing would take. She proposes:

> First the ABCs and then the numbers and then I would help you with the writing if you made a mistake. I would help you, just by telling you the letters or something. First the numbers, then the ABCs and then how to write.

Heather indicates that she would also help by giving both spelling and phonics assistance. Reading, however, would not be a required skill in order to learn how to write. Heather indicates that she learned to write before reading and reasons, from her own experience:

> Well, I don't know how to read very good, but I know how to read some.

While she does say that learning to write preceeds learning to read, she shows by her comments that she is developing an awareness of the recursive nature of learning inherent in the relationship between reading and writing. They are complementary processes, each contributing in different ways to her emergent literacy. When asked if one could learn to write without knowing how to read, she replies:

> Yes, and then you could recognize the words and you're reading. Cause I learned how to write before I learned how to read. I still can't read some words, but I can write a lot of words.

Heather has some early memories about learning to write. She recalls that her development led from pictures to letters and words:

> I can remember that I used to do just picture writing and then I started doing other writing; starting to do writing like I do now, using letters and words.

Her recollection is reminiscent of the term "drawing writing" that she used in an earlier description of writing in her classroom. That written language is clearly meaning-laden is apparent to her. If writing is communicative, then drawing, something that she seems to consider to be a legitimate developmental aspect of emergent writing literacy, is likewise capable of carrying just as powerful a message as conventional writing. Dyson (1985) notes that children often combine drawing and whatever writing strategies they have to express a range of ideas.

Three books that Heather has written are the source of interesting discussion. One is a book about her pets called "Guinea Pigs". The content consists of illustrations of the pigs and their names written beside or under their pictures. A second is an imaginary story about a little girl entitled "The Summer Girl". The content of this book again consists of pictures, but the story follows a definite narrative sequence.The final book is biographical and is titled "A Book About Me", and contains only a few illustrations and two captions about Heather. While the book is not yet completed, Heather has already planned the remainder of the content.

Several comments need to be made about these three samples of writing. First of all, the source of the writing is the content itself. That is, while Heather was interested in making a book, the topics were not firm until she saw the actual subject. They arise from her very real world and the things that happen in it. Of the guinea pig book she says:

> See, I thought of making a book: I didn't know what kind of book and then I went over to the guinea pigs and then I knew. And about these pictures, I thought of the looks of the guinea pigs and then I drew them.

In a discussion of "The Summer Girl", Heather relates a similar account. While the story is as she says an imaginary one, the content reflects immediate experiences in her life. It is Hallowe'en time and that is mentioned in the text; the costumes that her brother and sister are planning to wear are mentioned in the story; her brother and sister are characters themselves in the story.

The third story book, the autobiography, relates immediate experiences in her life and has at its centre a subject very personal to Heather and one about which she has considerable knowledge: her and her family.

In all three of the pieces Heather has had to make some conscious decisions about format and content and in making these decisions she has shown that she possesses a wealth of knowledge about written language as it pertains to book format. Topics have to be chosen; covers have to be designed. Books need titles; the content and the title must be related. Often with children this age, the content sometimes bears little relation to the text that eventually appears. Illustrations are used to complement the text.

The book format is interesting in itself. It is interesting to speculate why Heather did not choose a sheet of paper and instead do several illustrations and captions. Heather knows that books are the vehicle within which to capture many related ideas and pictures and to convey them in a holistic manner to a potential audience. Heather speaks further about the source of her ideas and their relationship to this particular form for writing:

> I don't know. I just think of a book and once I've thought of it, I think of what I should call it.

Discussing how it might be that adults get ideas for their writing, Heather speculates that somehow the thinking and writing that adults do are simultaneous acts. The simultaneous writing and thinking is different than that which Heather does; adults already know what to write as soon as they begin to write. Heather speculates:

> I think they decide to make a book, just decide to make a book and their head thinks while they are writing; because they know what to write right away.

It may be, to a six-year-old, that when adults write, they look as if they are engaged in some automatic process. The speed with which they write, the odd scribble that they use and the intention with which adults write, may well give that illusion. If anything, adult writers know that it is not as simple as the head thinking while the hands write. Returning to the notion of intention, adults do not write for exploratory purposes and for the same sorts of play-related purposes as do children. So when an adult does sit down to write and is observed by a child, it is small wonder that it appears as if an adult, engrossed in quite purposive behaviour, knows what to write right away.

However automatic the act may appear, Heather realizes that there are some similarities between adult and children's writing. Both adults and children sometimes run out of ideas or pause during their writing to seek new input. When this happens to Heather, she has an interesting strategy to which she turns. She relates:

> Think of what you could put next. If you forgot something you could go back to the place. The place where you thought it. That would make you think it again.

This is a fascinating insight on her part, consistent with re-reading strategies that Bissex (1986) has identified. Heather indicates the role and indeed value of reading and its relationship to composition. Alluding to the notion of writing as permanence of thought, Heather sees that by returning to the writing, which is really previous thought made permanent, this is then a means to stimulate more writing and a way to prompt ideas, ideas related to what had been previously written. For Heather, writing functions as a permanent thought holder, an extension of Harste's (1980) notion of writing as a place holder.

Not only do immediate experiences in her life give rise to writing ideas, but also literate products in her environment. Songs that she has learned at school are reproduced at home, not always in their lyrical entirety. In one instance, a song about colours is reproduced. Instead of writing the colour words, Heather has used coloured crayons to draw the song with the appropriate colour representing the corresponding colour word in the song. She reads:

> Oh, red, yellow, pink, blue are colours that you know. Black and brown and purple too and white just like the snow. Pink and grey and violet, gold green and orange. That's all I got to. See, we know a song of it.

It is tempting to assume that this composition is a brilliant stroke on Heather's part, using colours as a sort of rebus. She has carefully matched form with function and the medium is so much a part of the message. Heather's orchestration of these decisions is clear evidence of her sophistication. This is one of many strategies that Heather has developed to enable her to use written language, in its various forms, to imply message and to create meaning.

Another piece of writing reflects the influence of school as a source for products done at home. Heather has written the lyrics to a Hallowe'en song that was learned at school. While the idea is school-based, the writing itself takes place at home. Perhaps there are few opportunities to do writing of this kind at school. Perhaps this kind of writing is not valued in the classroom context because it does not follow the usual form that is taught or encouraged as part of the curriculum. It may also be that school does not provide sufficient time for children to write spontaneously, when they feel inclined to do so. There is also the very real possibility that children learn very early what the expectations at school are; this writing does not fit.

Still another piece of work has as its source something that she has seen on television. It is a poem about fruit, and as with the colour song, it is written using colour to complement the written words. The colour words are each done in their particular colour.

What is beginning to emerge, as Heather's efforts are examined, is a clear picture of the form that Heather's literacy development is taking. If the argument were made that being literate implies the use of symbols to communicate in a conventional way, then the claim could be made that Heather's literacy is emerging. An equal and opposite case could be made however, that Heather's literacy is already substantially developed and quite intact. She has developed a system that is quite capable of communicating meaning for intended audiences, using a vast array of symbols, each chosen as a function of the message and the purpose for communicating. This view may be somewhat at odds with what is appreciated in classrooms.

Heather gives an account of her writing in action and begins to detail how she writes and how she spells. She uses examples to explain how she writes words:

> Sounding out. See I sound out the letters. Just by thinking of the, like AT: I sound out AAA - T, AAA - TUH. And then I would write A T.

Her writing shows the beginnings of punctuation; there are dots between the words in some of her samples. Heather is able to explain not only what they are called and their function, but also explains the need for such conventions. As with Adam, Heather possesses an awareness of audience and realizes that for the message to be completely received by the reader, the message must be readable. But this discovery is not one that has its origin in the classroom. The source of the punctuation is in observation in a literate environment. Heather comments:

> They are periods. So they (reader) know it's the last of the letter. The person who got it. I don't know; I just saw mummy do periods and I started to do them.

This reinforces her earlier observation that little adult writing is done in her classroom. If the classroom environment does not demonstrate literacy in natural action, then it follows that children can pick up very little about the real and pragmatic nature of written language.

Heather expands her description of writing strategies and indicates limitations of the knowledge that she brings to the task at hand as the discussion moves to talking about adult writing. In her telephone book, she has attempted some cursive writing, emulating that which her mother and her older sister do. However, she claims to have no knowledge about what grown-up writing is like; she does not have access to that information because of her age:

> I don't know, because I'm not a grown-up.

Heather does know something of the nature of adult writing though. To do grown-up writing one would have to know how to do something specific, she explains:

> The words. How to write the real words. You know, when you sound out words, those aren't, that isn't real writing, because sometimes you don't have the right answers.

This is an interesting distinction between child and adult practice. Whatever instructional techniques and strategies are being encouraged at school, Heather may realize, are just temporary, something to be learned and tolerated until the real thing is mastered.

Much of Heather's writing has its origin in play activities. Heather not only plays at writing, but uses writing to accompany play activities. Badges and traffic signs were made when she and a friend were playing police. Playing post office with her brother necessitated the writing of both envelopes and letters, which were subsequently delivered. Making activity sheets and math questions became part of playing school. When she played store, it was necessary to write cheques; playing house meant the writing of grocery lists. Playing games involved writing directions, rules and consequences.

That Heather is clearly aware of the relationship between writing and reading is illustrated by one final example. As with Avaleigh, Heather has committed her musical explorations to paper, but in a more concrete way than Avaleigh. Heather has written the letters of the note names down to capture a song that she has written. In the absence of musical instruction, Heather has made writing do the task; her understanding of the uses of the written language system is expansive. It is perhaps desirable that a child's imagination should be the limiting agent rather than convention be that which interferes with early efforts.

The three children, Avaleigh, Adam and Heather have demonstrated that their writing growth has involved gradual refinement as they have made and integrated decisions about meaning, language and conventions into their developing repertoires as young writers. They have also shown that, while writing for them is a challenge, it is nevertheless a source of continual delight.

In the next chapter, the last of three that analyze the data, the parent interview protocols are used as a starting point for discussions concerning both children's and parents' understandings about written language acquisition.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS: PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

This is the third of three chapters that addresses the analysis of the data. In this chapter, analysis and discussion go hand in hand as a myriad of influences in the writing environment of young children continue to be explored. A number of issues relevant to children's understandings about written language are discussed. Descriptions of comments, views and perceptions drawn from both interviews and discussions with parents in the context of writing samples, are presented.

In this chapter, the parent interview protocols are used as a starting point for discussions concerning both children's and parents' understandings about written language acquisition. The strategies that children use to assist with their writing and their writing behaviour are examined. Questions about how children make and test hypotheses as they develop knowledge about the writing process are addressed. Insights into how children perceive reading and writing relationships are entertained.

What Does Willo Say About Avaleigh's Writing?

Willo's perception is that little writing is being done at school by Avaleigh; in fact she thinks that there is little writing happening for any of the children in the classroom:

> She's not doing any writing at school. Actually, the only writing she's ever brought home--they write this newsletter every day-- whoever has snack gets to write it. But all it involves is that they write their names on it.

Willo indicates the teacher's role in the production of the newsletter writing. While the children may be responsible for the ideas, and the dictation of what it is that they want to communicate, it is the teacher who actually does the writing. Willo does not consider this practice to be writing:

> The statements are apparently the children's choice of what they want in it, but they're written by the teacher. And then at the bottom, each child gets to do a picture and then underneath it, written in the teacher's hand it says, "This is me standing beside my snowman" or whatever. So basically, she's not doing writing at all.

It is clear from her comments that Willo feels that children are more capable of using written language than they are either given credit for or than they are permitted to do at school. However, this brief glimpse of teacher practice may not fully appreciate the teacher's intentions or may underestimate the actual expertise that the teacher may have.

Very shortly afterward, Willo indicates that she does not consider play to be a productive activity in the classroom, yet it is an integral part of the environment that she strives to provide at home. The teacher, she feels, is not responding to interests and aptitudes that the child may display:

> I don't think there's much writing going on because Avaleigh is really keen to try new things; she loves the challenge but the teacher's attitude is to let them play.

There is some danger in viewing written products as indicators of the sum of learning about written language that may be occurring. It could be that Avaleigh is learning things in an incidental manner; what enables her to perform so well at home in writing may be a residue of the skills or a consolidation of the things learned at school. However, if it is allowed that knowledge about written language is being accumulated at school, it might be expected that it would be manifested in more ways than are indicated by either Willo or Analeigh.

While Willo admits that there are a number of activities in the classroom in which children may become involved, there is no one activity that concerns itself solely with writing.

Willo offers that in the absence of a writing centre, writing could be integrated into some of the existing activities and proposes:

> In the classroom they have activities set up and as far as I can see, there is no activity involving writing. There's (Willo lists a number of centres) and I suppose that you can make writing about any of those things, come up with an activity, say writing about them or even labelling.

Willo expresses a concern that perhaps there is too little emphasis on learning to write or writing being taught at school and that there is little apparent structure in the classroom program:

> There doesn't seem to be an organized activity. So I think you have to get a happy medium with play, because right now I feel that she's not getting enough of a challenge. She's writing a lot, but it's all here (at home), never motivated by anything that happens at school.

Willo indicates that there is no writing activity initiated by the teacher at school. For some reason, Willo feels that the teachers ought to be initiating writing. This view, however, is at odds with the philosophy that Willo practices daily at home. Willo does feel that child-initiated activities in the context of a supportive atmosphere are the way that children will best learn about written language. In comments made early in the study Willo sees some of Avaleigh's writing efforts as indicative of a desire for more academic information. In particular, "pretend writing", or "fake writing", as Willo labels it, is seen as an indicator of a need to progress and that the use of scribble writing means that Avaleigh is now ready to move on to conventional writing forms. Playing school means that she wants more. It might be more appropriate to think of these play efforts as indicators of consolidated skills and understandings that Avaleigh has in her repertoire at the moment. Intervention at this point may be premature and detract from the knowledge that Avaleigh has developed. Willo explains:

> I find that a lot of the things that they do at school are not initiated by the teacher. I find that the teachers aren't really initiating anything in the way of writing at school. Everything they have done at school in the way of printing--at least say, is something they wanted to do in a free activity time--including one thing that that makes me feel that she is really hungrier for academics than she previously was--she has these books where she--you know the fake writing?--pretend writing?

Frustrations that Willo is feeling about the school system or about the adjustment of her young children to the school environment may account for these perceptions. Her concern that Avaleigh is not receiving enough written language instruction may be rolled into her concern that children in general are poorly served in a number of areas by school and that parents who are concerned and interested must assume a considerable portion of the responsibility for their child's education. She explains:

> So far I've been saying,"Oh well, they're not really doing any musical instruments at school; I'll do that on my own. We won't go to French immersion; I'll try to get it to her on my own." And one by one I'm going down this list of all things I want her to do and I'm ending up sort of doing them all on my own outside of school time and I'm thinking that they should be doing something at school. They are there for how many hours? I'm starting to feel a bit more demanding about wanting some things to be happening there besides socialization.

Willo does, however, have some idea of the sorts of things that could be done to promote language awareness in children; her comments are not made in ignorance. She is not quite sure where the perceived blame or responsibility should rest. She wonders if it is the teacher or are the schools that are in general responsible:

> It's frustrating when you talk about the schools because when I think about the magic things that are all around, ideas for promoting writing and reading, and when I see what they're doing in the classroom. But then I guess that boils down to an individual teacher thing.

According to both Willo and Avaleigh, most writing is done at home. It is interesting to note that while Willo is not teaching Avaleigh to write at home (in the instructional sense of what she means ought to be happening at school), the writing that Avaleigh is doing at home is a part of her play and thus a part of her learning. If Willo's perception that the teacher does indeed subscribe to some sort of learning through play atmosphere in the class, then children might be expected to use writing in their play or begin to play at writing.

The question becomes one of why a scarcity of school writing is reported.? It may be that there are other attractive options at school in which children can immerse themselves. Moreover, the personal incidents to which children often respond through writing may not happen as often or with as much impact at school. Another reason may be that the audience for writing at school is not as attentive or as available as the audience that a young child has at home. Finally, it may be that the child feels little personal ownership, since the teacher may indeeed control the writing in the class, including the writing times, topics and possibly even the form that it might take.

Willo begins to describe the writing that is done at home, characterizing it as very personal, with an intended audience, usually her family. Avaleigh's writing takes the form of gifts or presents to them. Willo wonders if some need for approval is a part of this focus on the family as audience:

> One thing about her writing. It always seems to be focused towards the family in the sense of giving us something. Every single scrap of material that she does, she brings to me as a gift, wanting approval, or a present or--this is like 500 pieces a day She hardly ever does something and just leaves it; she always brings it and makes it like a present.

The writing is meant to be read and for the most part carries some message whether it is a grocery list, a note to someone in the family or a birthday invitation. There is generally some illustrative accompaniment. Willo explains:

> It's mostly things that relate to other people, like in the sense of letters to people. Or lists, sort of living things--we are going to get groceries so we write a list or she writes a lot of things to her family. I don't know what you would call all that. Of course I think that's her beginning writing. Her writing is very personal, because it's all sort of outward.

Willo, recalling Avaleigh's first interests in print, identifies an initial source. She offers this sparse and exclusive account:

> We have this alphabet on the wall, just the alphabet with pictures of things and I guess for the longest time it went from there. She'd trace them; she'd copy them. She'd just be really interested in this alphabet.

This slim account is only a beginning, however; Willo expands her discussion about when Avaleigh first became interested in print as she begins to reflect. What is not indicated by this comment is the extent to which Willo may or may not be aware of the role of a literate environment as opposed to the influence of a single identifiable source. It is interesting to note how her account begins to expand. Willo speaks of the value of closer observation of her own children's abilities and the value of participating in the present study. That she will become an astute observer, she feels, will be one of the important outcomes of the work:

> Only last year. So she'd be two and a half, three? Seems to be a bit earlier but you forget. That's why this is such a good project, because it makes you register; I wish I'd kept more stuff of their different development. I can see how my perceptions will become much more valuable. I'm not used to doing that these days. It will be a good exercise for me because I'll be more perceptive. Because I'm supposed to be watching, I'll make more of a conscious effort to notice things like that.

Willo's assessment of the sorts of things that children need to help them with their writing is consistent with the notion that writing is very personal to Avaleigh. Rather than speaking of skills that are needed to learn to write, Willo stresses:

> I think they need involved personal experiences.

This is an odd comment when put in the context of Willo's earlier claims about a lack of direct instruction about writing on the part of the classroom teacher. The topics must be personally relevant, the motivation internal. While the experience may be external in origin, it is the internal organization of the experience and the subsequent decisions made by the child that determine the form of the written output. Children make sense of the experience and then produce some sort of output. Willo explains:

> They are pretty responsive but they seem keenest and Avaleigh works on her own best when it's something like invitations to her birthday party or tell something at her house or the most self motivated ones are ones when she's trying to write love notes to her family and things like that. Those are the ones that she initiates.

Willo is discovering that when Avaleigh has a personal stake in what it is that she is going to write about, she does more of it, more frequently and with more interest. While there are suggestions on the parent's part, Willo explains that they take the form of invitations for involvement rather than directives for writing:

> But I do suggest things like well, the grocery list. I say, "Do you want to write the grocery list?". And so she would do that or I say, "Let's make invitations to your party." Usually it doesn't take much suggestion.

The scope of the literate environment begins to expand as discussion centres on the role model presented by the parents. While Avaleigh may not always see mother and father actively involved in writing, she is nevertheless quite aware of its existence and its importance in the home context. Willo offers a description of the home environment that is reminiscent of what Harste (1987) calls "print littered":

> Well, my husband does a lot of work at home. Avaleigh doesn't see a lot of that, but she knows that he's doing that and visually, there is his desk with lots of cluttered writing stuff and then the computer stuff. I've got a desk down there that's cluttered with writing stuff. I guess our whole house is often cluttered with writing stuff.

In her discussion of the specific kinds of writing that she and her husband do at home, Willo begins to develop a typology of sorts. The writing is classified as project related that might include school parent council tasks or book reviews, work related that might include proposals and medical reports, social writing that includes letters and notes to neighbours, lists such as household needs, personal writing that might include diary entries and household notes that consist of messages to family members. This is a useful description of the very functional and real writing in which households engage. Willo recognizes, in particular, the importance of the household notes and their contribution to reading development. Avaleigh learns about written language by not only creating notes in the home to her family and household pets but also by reading and responding to notes written to her. The extent of the literate background expands as Willo observes:

> We're really heavy on the household notes around here. They write notes to all the critters and when one fish dies, they write a note to the fish that died and notes to the fish that are left. A lot of reading which is tied in with writing too, becoming familiar with the letters, because there was this fascination with the letters before Avaleigh could write them. I've always brought home lots of books and they know that I love books and that has passed on a bit. There are always tons of books and paper around so if nothing else, they might have some sort of familiarity with books.

A considerably broader view of literacy acquisition has now emerged compared to Willo's original observation that Avaleigh's writing interest may have stemmed from an alphabet poster.

Connections between reading and writing are made clearer as Willo refers to an example drawn from Avaleigh's older sister. In talking about relationships between what is read and what is written, Willo illustrates a similarity in the kinds of language used:

> There is a real similarity between the kind of stuff she is writing and the kind of stuff that I read to her. Some of them are almost different characters with the same sort of story line.

At the same time Willo gives an account of one aspect of Avaleigh's entry to literacy. Modelling the writing behaviour of those in her immediate environment and playing at writing was an integral part of Avaleigh's early efforts. Willo recalls:

> Just one other thing about the early fascination with writing. One important thing that I forgot was of course the materials. Her early fascination was with the actual implements of writing. Like even now--pencils, pens, markers. She just loves the diversity of instruments and so I guess long before she was actually forming her name, she was really enjoying playing with paper and such.

As more details of Avaleigh's writing behaviour are discussed, Willo speaks of the times that Avaleigh chooses to do writing, indicating that there is no specific time at which Avaleigh likes to write and that for the most part the writing is prompted by an incident or a personal experience. Willo further notes that writing is sometimes an intentional activity for Avaleigh, that is, she will organize herself to write exclusively and at other times writing is something that is done to complement play activity. Writing is often serendipitous for Avaleigh; what seemingly begins as drawing or doodling ends up with written accompaniment. Willo's account follows:

> The times that she chooses are inconsistent; they are all hours in a day. The writing itself is usually prompted by an incident. She might be playing store or something and so she will dash in to make signs or money or something to go along with the game or we'll just be hugging and she will say, "You stay here; I'm going to make something", and she'll run off and come back with a sign saying I LOVE YOU MUM or make me a book. What happens often too is she sits down to draw--she's a constant drawer--and she will start to draw and colour and then do writing to complement it.

If it is the case that writing occurs at various times during the day at home, then it seems there are some implications for the classroom. It would appear that having a set writing time may be unproductive for some children since, as Avaleigh has demonstrated, not all children write at regular times. If writing for some children is prompted by incidents that are of personal significance to them, then the challenge for the teacher becomes one of how to simulate or create similar sorts of experiences for the children. The question becomes one of what activities can be made a part of the classroom program to stimulate writing.

It seems curious that Willo, who has said earlier that she might prefer to see a more organized writing program, where Avaleigh could be taught some writing skills, should offer these observations about how the writing process operates for her child. There appears to be some dissonance in Willo's views and perceptions.

Willo begins to give an account of the strategies and resources that are used by Avaleigh as she writes. Avaleigh makes use of reference materials such as a variety of books and the alphabet chart on her wall. Children's magazines and library materials are referred to. She also uses lists of words that mother has previously supplied for different purposes. Previously completed pieces of writing are turned to as source material for current efforts. Her older sister is a source of encouragement, often providing the catalyst and model for the exploration of different forms of writing, most notably book making. That Avaleigh's writing abilities are just developing is offered by Willo as a possible reason why Avaleigh might make use of such resources. Questions to her mother take the form of asking for spellings with an emphasis on correctness. Willo observes:

> I'd say it's a lot of reference right now because she knows her letters but she's just learning words and so she tends to need a lot of help with words. She tends to ask mostly, "How do you spell such and such?" She likes to know how to spell correctly and so she tends to ask me constantly for spellings, "How do you spell?" and I say, "Sound out the letters".

Willo describes the nature of the help that she gives specific to Avaleigh's writing; she feels that the creation of a supportive context is paramount in any child's writing development. The environment consists of not only the physical necessities for writing such as paper and pen, but also the modelling of reading and writing behaviour. Constant encouragement and an appreciation of Avaleigh's efforts are hallmarks of this atmosphere. As well, there are occasions when initiation is seen as important. Perhaps, even with the very best of intentions, this is what is missing or in fact cannot be recreated in the classroom.

In spite of her description of the kind of help that she provides, Willo has doubts as to her effectiveness as a nourisher of Avaleigh's writing development and worries:

> I always feel that maybe I could initiate a few more things. I guess as a parent you never feel that you are doing enough. You always feel that you could be doing more. I feel like I could be doing more music, more outside things so I guess that I feel the same about writing.

Willo's account of the kind of help that she provides to Avaleigh emphasizes above all the role and importance of an attentive and supportive audience. Avaleigh generates the topics and it seems to Willo that Avaleigh almost teaches herself. Willo relates:

> A lot of the things that she does are self-initiated. And my biggest help is just being there when she wants to know how to spell something. She seems to teach herself. She gets it in her head to do a little project and she starts.

The nurturing context provided by the home is again contrasted to the school situation as Willo speaks about the extent of her help. She laments the dearth of writing coming home from school:

> I'm not doing any sort of organized writing exercises; it's more a nurturing thing. And as for writing at home and school, the only writing she has done this year has been here. The only writing that has come home from school has been her name on the newsletter--not even labels on anything. I thought they learned at school.

While these are legitimate observations on Willo's part, perhaps it is that children learn different things in school. And if it is true, as Willo says, that the vast majority of Avaleigh's writing is personal and oriented toward the family as audience, then the absence of this audience at school may preclude her engaging in similar sorts of writing.

Part of the supportive context that Willo has been describing includes the influences of literate others. Avaleigh's older sister is identified as a positive influence. Friends are an influence to the extent that they provide a convenient audience for invitations and letters. Neighbours are the recipients of many pictures and notes. The extensive influence of the family is omnipresent.

Willo recalls some of her memories about learning to write. Writing in Grade 3 consisted of memorizing lists of words and writing them as spelling practice. Grade 4 saw the introduction of organized grammar. She claims not to have done much creative writing before or after the acquisition of the skills in the junior grades, but whatever writing was, she did well in it, because Willo can recall getting marks in the high 90s for the remainder of her elementary career. One memory that she does have, and it is about reading, points to a contrast between her and her children and illustrates the confidence with which a young writer approaches the task in a supportive environment. She recalls:

> I thought about that and I didn't really have that many memories of learning to write. I did about learning to read and they were that when I came upon words I didn't know, I would never ask people what they meant, which is something that is different here because the kids are always asking me what. If I didn't know a word, I'd just try and make sense of it without.

Willo, as do the other parents in the study, proves herself to be quite capable and reliable in terms of offering a rather complete account of Avaleigh's development in writing. Her account essentially provides a model of Avaleigh's development, contributing to a more complete picture of Avaleigh.

Initially, Willo observes, pictures permeate children's early efforts at written communication. The message is very much in the illustration and is augmented by talking about the picture:

> I find that when it comes to talking to kids, their pictures seem to be the big way that they express themselves right now, as opposed to writing. At four years of age, their pictures are so expressive. Avaleigh's done books at home before, but not with printing on, only with pictures.

Willo also feels that children's linguistic awareness is quite well developed at this age. That children are able to play with words, make puns amd joke, she feels is indicative of this sophistication. Willo comments:

> I'm glad you appreciate her sense of humour, because that's one of the things I find most amazing with their learning--how early they have this. You can tell that they understand things because they're joking about it already with rhyming things or variations on a theme.

Repetition of text and message is a recognizable part of Avaleigh's development and had been so for at least six months prior to the beginning of the study. Willo indicates the form that the repetitions take:

> Avaleigh gives me no less than a dozen of these (I LOVE YOUs) a day. I've got millions of them saved. A lot of them are the same sentence over and over. She must have written that sentence since she learned how to write it, a dozen or fifteen times a day even.

This particular point in Avaleigh's development is marked by prolific output. While drawings form the bulk of her written expression, written accompaniment can be found on some pieces. Usually, it takes the form of love notes to someone in the family.

Rather than view repetitions as a hiatus in development or a failure to progress, it is perhaps appropriate to consider the notion of consolidation periods. Perhaps it is that hypotheses are being tested when children seem to reach a so-called plateau. Graves (1981) characterizes these periods as times of balance and imbalance in children's writing. That Avaleigh demonstrates possible consolidation periods is reflected in Willo's comment:

> She went to a birthday party and did the invitations for that. But it was the same thing. And pictures, she'll do the same thing for weeks and then change to something else. Once she does learn a word like the I LOVE YOU business, then she does it over and over and over.

On another occasion, Willo indicates that hiatuses or shifts to different kinds of writing in favour of another are typical of Avaleigh's behaviour. She observes a current preoccupation with craft activities. And in speaking to Avaleigh, she remarks:

> You know what I have noticed lately? You used to do those I LOVE YOU MOMs all the time--hundreds of them a day. And you haven't done them for weeks and weeks and all of a sudden, you came out with an I LOVE YOU.

Willo characterizes these periods as phases:

> Yes and she sort of goes through phases. The time she was making these little alphabet sets, she made 3 of them. And then she hasn't done that for a while.

Love notes that focus on the family as audience seem to be typical of Avaleigh's writing. Nevertheless there are instances where print alone occurs and the nature of the audience changes. Seldom is there print alone except in cases where the function of the writing dictates.

Avaleigh has begun to appreciate a sophisticated understanding: form follows function. More importantly, she has distinguished among a number of different forms of writing that are obviously at her disposal. About form Willo observes:

> No, they don't happen as much. There is usually, nine times out of ten, a picture with a caption. Very seldom is there print alone or if there is, there is usually a purpose, like a birthday invitation or a list.

Another identifiable period in Avaleigh's development is when she busied herself making and displaying signs or labels for household objects. Willo characterizes this as a phase when text was not accompanied by illustration.

While Willo indicates that at this particular point in Avaleigh's career as a writer pictures with captions are predominant, Avaleigh is nevertheless playing at extending writing and with it, her knowledge. Scribble writing as part of her play activities can be seen at this point. Willo observes:

> I'd say it's captions on pictures and most of them seem to be gifts. They do play school though sometimes and do this kind of writing --scribbling, pretend writing.

Willo notes that several months later, at Christmas, Avaleigh begins to write letters to friends and relatives. Communicating over time and distance, with a less immediate response to her writing, allows Avaleigh to begin to expand her understanding of audience.

The reader must interpret the notion of stages, as the term is used here, with reservation. While it is readily seen that Avaleigh engages in a variety of activities that involve the use of written language, it is also clear is that there are periods when one particular type of writing holds her attention for some time. However, this is not sufficient evidence upon which to formulate clear and distinct stages that are exclusive of other behaviours. Rather appropriation of different writing forms should be seen as developing simultaneously, as some researchers have suggested. That they have been described as stages is more to present the notion and to reflect Willo's perceptions than to indicate their existence as discrete units.

Discussing possible influences on Avaleigh's writing, Willo identifies several sorts of assistance that Avaleigh uses to advantage. To help with spelling Avaleigh relies on words that she has already in her repertoire. Although not always spelled correctly, they pose no problem for Avaleigh. For words that Avaleigh does not feel comfortable in attempting she asks her sister for spelling. Her sister's writing, on occasion, provides the content of Avaleigh's text as well. Willo observes:

> With Isla's help she sounded them out. Some words she knows already, the ones you see repeated and people's names. One interesting thing was that all the letters had the same content as Isla's letters. She didn't copy Isla's letters; she just used the same wording. The content I've noticed in a lot of things is almost identical.

Avaleigh uses her sister's work, not in a direct way, but more as a reference and a model, a framework within which to shape her ideas. This notion is reminiscent of what Graham Greene the novelist, observed about his own initial writing efforts. Greene (1971), in his autobiography, relates that upon going up to Balliol College he was successful in getting some of his early prose and poetry accepted by the editor of a commercial quarterly. He recalls being so tentative about his emerging style that he emulated the work of writers that had impressed him in his earlier youth; he did not so much copy their material as he tailored his style closely to theirs. Avaleigh sees her sister as more than a source of words. The fact that Isla writes is incentive enough to spur on Avaleigh's efforts, illustrating the powerful influence of the model provided by literate others and the significance of a model. Willo says:

> Avaleigh is only four and she's sort of copying Isla. The books that Isla is doing in grade one and bringing home, Avaleigh is asking her teacher if she can do and so Isla has been a good influence on her because she's already printing these books that Isla is doing at six years.

Regardless of whether Avaleigh's writing is generated by personally significant incidents or incorporated from existing models, its production is sustained by the nature of the support that her mother provides. Willo describes Avaleigh's questions and her response to them:

> She comes to me and says, "How do you spell such and such?" and I always tell her. I try to encourage her to sound but she tends to want to produce it more than she wants to sound it out. So I tell her how to do it rather than insist that she figure it out herself.

Without this type of unqualified support the nature of Avaleigh's efforts might be changed, and Willo feels that Avaleigh would not persist if she had to rely on her own efforts continually. Not all of Willo's help is in the form of correct spellings. Mother involves her in the writing that she as an adult has to do, the lists, cards and letters that are part of the adult literate environment. While involvement of Avaleigh in real writing activities at home is important, so is the maintenance of the physical aspects that allow writing to happen, and not always in the traditional forms:

> I am pretty conscious about keeping lots of stuff around. We have paper, pencils, markers, crayons, paint, scissors and rubber stamps too. Glue and things. We've often written names with glue and sprinkled things on. We've used playdough and made letters and things. Sand in the sandbox.

Coles and Goodman (1980) indicate that there are many children who use a variety of writing instruments when composing for different purposes in out of school settings and that flexibility and opportunity for choice ought to be a significant aspect of any composition curriculum. If there are restrictions governing the type of paper and implements that children must use, it is possible that such practices may interfere with the composing processes of young children.

Mother's assistance also consists of writing lists for Avaleigh to copy and acting as scribe for her dictation when necessary. These practices seem to be consistent with Willo's notion that to sustain writing and indeed to encourage it, children's requests for help need immediate response.

Some of Avaleigh's writing efforts take several days to complete. Perseverance becomes a highlight of children's writing when the child can determine the purpose. Willo describes her own role in one of Avaleigh's writing episodes:

> And how we worked that was that she made the family names and she told me who she wanted to invite and I told her how to spell them. And so she wrote them down with me telling her how to spell them and as she did invitations, she crossed off whom she had invited. She said what she wanted on the inside and I showed her how to write it. She's really got perseverance; every day, she'd go and do a few more. I really hope that she keeps those "stick to it" habits.

The real issue here concerns the notion of control. If the child author is in control of the writing and has what Giaccobe (1983) refers to as the necessary conditions to promote writing namely time, ownership and response, then the writing will often surpass adult expectations. It may be that what is so readily achieved in the home setting eludes capture or duplication in the classroom context.

Willo believes very strongly in the notion that writing is meaningful to the child author and that the impetus for changes in writing or development come from within the child, almost as though they were conscious decisions. In a discussion of how it might be that children shift in their writing to attempting stories, Willo suggests that part of the reason may be past literate experiences with the story form. An equally important aspect of what might give rise to story production has to with a receptive and responsive audience:

> I think with her stories though, it's to get our approval. It would be curious to know if she would write stories if there were no one cheering her along. It would be interesting to see how much later, writing develops in kids who are isolated.

And Willo wonders also about the possible effects of the researcher, musing:

> What I said before was that your interest in her writing affects her a little bit. It would be interesting to know if studied kids did more writing than they would have otherwise.

With much excitement, Willo summarizes Avaleigh's current level of proficiency. Avaleigh has just now begun to put several related sentences together in her writing. It is a recent development, arising within the last four weeks. That Willo views this as a natural progression in her child's development is powerfully expressed in understatement. She concludes:

> I don't know; maybe it was just the next step. I mean, she knew all the words.

It is equally exciting to speculate what those next little steps might be.

What Does Ann Say About Adam's Writing?

Ann begins with skepticism that anything of significance in terms of writing is happening at school. She is however more objective than Willo in that while little appears to be happening, Ann does not feel that instruction would improve the situation. Adam's well-being and his opportunities to interact take precedence over skill acquisition. That Adam does not write at school is not an issue. Of the classroom situation and the relationship with Adam's teacher, Ann details:

> Writing isn't something he'd choose to do at school. At school he will choose to play with someone else and writing isn't part of it. She knows that I don't want to particularly stress writing at all. She's talked to us and she knows that we don't care in the slightest. We'd much rather see him go in there and have a good time.

What writing is done at school by Adam or the other children involves mainly copying from an adult model and writing their names. Ann observes:

> The writing at school is copy writing. He did write a letter to Erin and I could tell that someone had written it and he'd copied it onto another page. So a couple of things like that and he writes his name on things. That's probably all the writing he does at school.

Adam's writing at home, by comparison, shows much more variety. He does some copying, not from dictated material but from books that are about the house. He makes signs and labels when he needs them; he writes notes and letters with an intended audience in mind. His efforts for the most part at home are independent and are usually part of his play. Writing is integrated into his various activities and what he is busy at seems to dictate what is needed in terms of written accompaniment.

Adam seldom initiates writing as a sole activity unconnected to his other activities. That writing is complementary to other kinds of activities in which Adam is involved is reflected by Ann's comments:

> I would say that it's integrated into most play most time. There is the odd thing that's a story type thing or a copy from a book that he's read but most of what he does is a sign for something that he's making. If he's playing a game that needs a

> stop sign, he'll write STOP. And the cards and notes. That's basically a TO SOMEONE, LOVE ADAM. That's basically all the writing he does.

During the course of the study, Adam wrote considerably fewer products than did the other two children. Discussing this, Ann indicates that she is content with Adam's progress. For her, developing literacy entails more than what might be indicated by quantity of written output. Adam's aquisition of knowledge about written language is a combination of many different kinds of input as Ann explains:

> No, I'm really happy with where he is. What he has done he's been very happy with and that's all that matters. He's exposed to words many times. He spends lots of time reading. He's soaking in still a lot at this point. I think that it will come quickly when it comes. I'm not worried in the slightest about it. Rather I would prefer to see him wait a while. I wouldn't be working on it at all. I'm happy with him taking his time because he'll do a good job of it when he does.

Ann begins to give a detailed account of the kinds of activities or experiences that children need to have to help them with their writing. The role of reading, being read to and its relationship to writing development is seen as critical. In fact, Ann says that it may indeed be all that is necessary:

> Exposure to books of course. I think that's about all too. To be helped I think they have to be read to a lot and they have to have a lot of exposure to a lot of different types of books whether or not they are actually reading.

As well as provision for the physical necessities that allow writing to flourish, there needs to be an appreciative and supportive audience. An emphasis on appreciation of what is attempted and very little in terms of instructional intervention before the writing is done, are necessary conditions. This supportive atmosphere will then allow the child to take risks with the writing, allowing both formulation and testing of hypotheses about the nature of written language. These provisions all work together, Ann feels, to stimulate and encourage growth in writing development:

> And exposure to pens and paper and an interest in looking at what's been produced on someone else's part too--to appreciate what has been done--but very little before it was done. Basically the option to try being there and noticing it and appreciating it after it's done, that spurring on more of it for sure.

In addition, the literate environment needs to include models to which children are regularly exposed. These can be models of writing that the child might see as part of his daily life or encounters with print in book format. Ann wonders how aware children are of the print around them and makes a good case for acquisition of literacy as something that occurs in more or less a natural way as opposed to something that can be taught:

> That's where the question of early remembrances of print comes in. You don't really even know when they are noticing the print. If the books are there, and if they're looking through them--Adam spends a lot of time sitting quietly looking at books--I don't know if he is looking at the pictures or he is looking at the print. He might be. He might not even say he is himself. It's something that, if it's there, there's probably some of it he is noticing whether he even realizes it or not. And I think that that familiarity with it makes it so that it's not such a strange and scary thing when he does try and want to read.

This view of natural aquisition of knowledge about written language casts the child simultaneously as a passive recipient and an active constructor. Moreover, time and options need to be left to Adam. Ann says:

> That whale book, he has looked at that; he's had it read to him probably at least a dozen times, but he has also sat and looked at it by himself a lot. And I guess facilities to be able to write when he wants to. There should be paper and pens around always for whatever use they might happen to come up in.

The models of writing at home to which Adam might be exposed take the form of what Ann describes as functional and useful, such as letters, lists, forms, plans and charts. In addition Adam has seen letters go through several rewrites. Ann describes the writing that she and her husband sometimes do:

> Lists. I've written quite a few letters too. In things like our dealings with the school board, Rick and I would work together on the rough copy. I would then write up a copy of it, Rick would read it over and then it would be typed. So he's certainly seen things that have gone through three stages of revision. And quite a bit of letter writing asking for information or dealing with a company. The ever present lists. Filling in of forms and planning stages, letter writing. I guess I make charts and stuff for my leather work. Lists--functional stuff you know--useful stuff.

The influence of Adam's sister becomes apparent when the discussion moves to times that Adam might choose to involve himself in writing. While his writing for the most part occurs as part of his general play activities, there are some few occasions when he will choose to write solely for the sake of writing. Ann observes that these times are usually prompted by working with Erin:

> There has been the odd case, but it's usually because he's doing something with Erin and she's done that; it's usually on someone else's initiation.

Adam's writing often coincides with the times that his sister chooses to write. It may be that Erin is, as was seen with Avaleigh, a source of ideas and a model for form. It might also be that Erin provides for Adam a responsive audience and a source of support. However brief his forays into print may be, the importance of working within the context of support such as that provided by his sister enables Adam to write and in turn stimulates more writing. Ann speculates:

> He chooses to write an awful lot when Erin writes. The example of someone else is certainly important to him.But integrated in play or on someone else's suggestion is when. It's usually in a flurry. One thing may spur on three things then.

The actual lengths of time that Adam spends on writing pieces vary; they may be either long or short, depending on the nature and purpose, among other things, of the writing. This seems to echo the notion of choice and control with respect to writing. Of children, Ann observes:

> I guess it depends on the task. It's appropriate for what they're doing and they use writing as well as they use any other skill that might be appropriate for what they're playing.

Adam's writing was earlier described as being not an intentional activity. Some ambiguity may be caused by the use of this term. The next anecdote may serve to resolve any misunderstanding. More specifically the term concerns whether Adam chooses writing as a deliberate activity at home and whether he prepares for it. Heather, as will be seen, in contrast to Adam, arranges her desk, chooses her paper and picks out crayons, pencils, markers or whatever. Writing for her becomes a sustained activity. This is not meant to imply though that subject matter is always premeditated; it only points out some differences in writing behaviour that are perhaps best described by the use of the term. In any event, Adam seldom sits down to write. Ann offers:

> He doesn't think much about that. But then he's not sitting down trying to write a story. He's pretty poor at that.

That Adam does not organize himself fits in well with the notion of spontaneity. If Adam were writing solely for writing then he might make a more deliberate effort to choose his materials. Ann elaborates on what she meant when she said that Adam was poor at writing. She is commenting about where, on some sort of developmental continuum, Adam might be. That a deliberate effort is part of writing development is not yet part of Adam's awareness. Ann says:

> That makes sense, but that's a much more mature aspect. Like when I said he was poor at it, I didn't mean that in a critical way. I mean it's not important. He does not see the importance. It hasn't occurred to him that it is necessary.

As if learning to write were some sort of conscious decision that is made by the child as part of a natural sequence of literacy acquisition, Ann sees that Adam has not made that next step. Unlike Heather, or his sister Erin, Adam has not yet begun to "take the task of writing to task". Ann reflects:

> I can see that Adam is not up to that yet. He has not yet decided "I want to learn to write." He has just in the last--well as I said, I think he's on the brink of reading. He's just recently--I think even mentioned much wanting to, not mentioned much that is important to him. His writing is totally spontaneous, exactly the opposite to the way that Heather is. I recall Erin being slightly more like Heather is--taking the task of writing to task.

Ann, discussing resources that Adam might use to assist him with his writing, indicates that he usually asks for assistance. Seldom does Adam rely on his previously written materials. Ann explains:

> I don't think that's really occurred to him yet. I don't think it's occurred to him to look in a book yet.

Ann gives an example of Adam using the same word in several pieces, yet it is spelled differently on different occasions. Perhaps Adam, unlike Avaleigh, does not yet see that writing can be used as a permanent representation of thought and that previously done work can be used as reference. It may also be that this spelling behaviour is indicative of a particular stage in his written language growth, not unlike that postulated by some researchers (Clay, 1975; Read, 1975). Ann observes:

> I was just cleaning up in the art area yesterday and saw that he had made a few Valentines that never did get sent to anyone, but he had written LOVE - L - A - V - and he's written LOVE many times - L - O - V - E - it never occurred to him. That's what looked right to him that time so that's what he wrote.

Perhaps it is that parent attitudes have lead Adam to be less conscious about the use of correct spelling. While Adam has a beginning and developing awareness of the fact that there are conventional spellings, their use and necessity has not been made apparent to him yet. Ann expresses her feelings:

> We have stressed, "Don't worry about that". That's probably the biggest intervention. He does seem to enjoy it more when he doesn't worry. He just kind of goes to it then and gets down what he wants to.

The help that Ann gives to Adam takes the form of providing spelling. She usually provides, however, not the spellings of entire words, but parts of them, syllabic sounds. When Adam asks for a complete spelling she advises him not to fret over it , but if he persists, she will supply the correct spelling. Ann also feels that if a child asks a question, it ought to be treated as a genuine request for asssistance and therefore should be given a response. This may differ somewhat from classroom practice, where the question might be redirected to the child and the child told to think about it a little more or to sound it out. Ann explains her view:

> By answering a question when he does seem distressed about not knowing how to get something down. He doesn't usually ask for a whole word but he'll ask for a certain sound - CH - (for example) and we'll help him with those for sure. I mean I'll help him with a word if he really wants to know it. Often, I will just say, "Don't worry about it." Now he doesn't very often ask but if he asks, I assume that he wants to know and I will tell him that one word. But I will usually tell him that one word and tell him not to worry about it and then he'll finish what he is doing by himself. If he seems distressed I will certainly give him the answer. I won't prod him with more questions, "How do you spell this? Does it sound like it?" I won't do that. I assume when they ask a question, they want to know the answer and I usually just tell them the answer. I don't try to get them to think of the answer: I don't like that tactic.

It seems that Ann is gentle and accepting of Adam's efforts to construct knowledge about written language, yet at the same time does give him an opportunity to accept (or reject) the help that she offers. She will supply spellings, but first gives Adam the option of ignoring spellings by advising him not to worry about them. The same is true of her directions to external resources that Adam might use to help him:

> I have said, "You could try this place". But that's not something that would be enough to deter him from asking for spellings. I guess it's just helping when he really wants it.

Discussing the influences behind Adam's writing, Ann identifies Erin, his sister, as playing a major role in his writing development. Erin is proud of Adam's work and communicates this to him. The importance of an appreciative audience and response to writing are clearly illustrated here. Ann wonders if Erin's influence is not stronger than the parent's influence:

> Certainly his sister has by far the single greatest influence, probably more than ours. She is very very complimentary of his attempts whether or not they are proper spelling. She thinks they're great when he gets anything down. She is likely the biggest reason that he doesn't come and ask us for proper spellings all the time. She does appreciate it.

Erin and Adam often collaborate on writing projects. They share ideas and Erin often gives spelling assistance. These joint efforts often result in more production than might have been achieved by Adam working alone. This is consistent with the findings of Coe (1987) and Dyson and Genishi (1982), that the quality and quantity of written efforts differ when writing is a collaborative and often social undertaking. Ann observes:

> That is a joint effort. He's done part of it but she's obviously gotten him started on it, so he is using her idea to a large extent. He might have made the same model, but he may not have made that map at all. But because she got him started on it, he did a really good job of writing some of the words there that he may have not gotten to otherwise.

When Adam plays with other friends, the output is different and the writing minimal. Ann explains that expression, however, takes a different form:

> His friend Mat--their big thing is making things like a wolf suit or other things, and there might be some words-- something might be appropriate on that if thay had a badge, but I don't think that he does a lot of writing (in that context).

Ann refers to expressive development that has its direct origins in the literate environment. She observes that a literate environment need not have solely print related materials, but that all the resources that assist in the development of expressive facility contribute to the environment. Creative activities develop and refine ideas, that in turn aid literacy acquisition and further development. Ann coins an appropriate phrase, "pre-writing" to reflect the sum of these literate experiences and offers:

> You can see what the availability of all the resources has done. Our kids are busy all the time with God knows what--doing something but they have the ideas there. And they are getting more and more developed at expressing them instead of plugging into something else. I guess the writing just comes as part of that. I think all the creating, all the drawing, cutting is all pre-writing experiences. I think it's what you create yourself and sooner or later there will be more words involved.

This view casts writing as the culmination of being able to organize and make sense of the experiences that constitute literate awareness. Writing is seen as a refined process of organization. All those other things lead up to it; being able to organize time, materials, ideas, physical things, perseverance and self-reliance all lead to the culmination. Ann, looking at Adam once more from a developmental perspective, sees that he is not yet there; he does not yet see or use writing as a culmination of experience. Ann observes:

> I believe that he is not there yet. He hasn't set it upon himself as a task. I see Heather wanting to do it for writing's sake, whereas it is not something that's important to Adam as yet.

Ann sees that adult models in the context of a literate environment may be a sufficiently strong impetus to stimulate written language awareness:

> With other influences, if there are people around that are writing and he wishes he could do it, that is a strong enough influence right there to work at it for its own sake. So far, he's shunned any of that and he wants to play.

Writing skill carries with it a certain amount of power. A child can get things done through writing. What the child knows can be demonstrated; the child can leave messages, can reach others through invitations and can correspond. Ann does not see that Adam is using writing to accomplish any of these ends. She explains this absence in terms of readiness once more:

> There is certainly a bundle of them and the power is exciting when you get it. But it's not something he's ready to set himself to do.

Ann is asked to recall early memories of what it was like to be a child learning to write. The mechanics, the physical skill, the rote learning, the word exercises and teacher practices first present themselves. Comments like the following are typical of her reminiscences:

> I remember I started cursive writing in grade three. Learning to use a pen, being able to use a pen when you could write neatly enough. I remember trying to fill out little sentences and blanks. It was in grade 1 or something like that. I also remember being in junior grades in Quebec and writing eight foolscap pages for one exam. I think there were expectations for the amount of written work. The volume was important for sure. Still is eh?

Commenting that, as a child, she did not have access to the same opportunities for writing growth that she now provides for Adam, Ann offers some useful advice for parents consistent with her view that the development of expression in its many forms and its relationship to writing is extremely important. She advises:

> I know that we didn't have a whole area set up where you could make a mess all the time and that there was not unlimited amounts of paper all the time. I always say to friends, "Put your money that you're going to spend on toys into art materials."

In comparison to the other two children in the study, Adam has written considerably fewer pieces of writing. However, the extent of his understanding about written language ought not to be assumed from an examination of written samples only. While Adam has written little during the study, he has nevertheless been actively involved in the construction of knowledge about written language. Ann mentions that he has been asking about writing and about sounds, rather than actually writing. This supports the notion that children constantly construct and test hypotheses about the nature of written language in their everyday activities. And not all learning about writing is done by writing. It is one more example of how children learn about print in a literate environment.

Examining some mid-study samples, Ann notes that aside from a few labels that he has made Adam has written very little. She does say however, that the collected samples represent work done in a relatively short period of time. Ann characterizes his writing as occurring in bursts:

> He's written a few labels of leftover food for the freezer. He wrote EGG SALAD today. But he hasn't written too many things on paper, except what you've seen. That was all one flash, within a 48 hour period.

That Adam attempts writing in spurts coincides with observations made of how Avaleigh approaches the writing task. While her efforts appear to be more sustained, she nevertheless has periods of activity and periods of inactivity. Adam's behaviour certainly supports the notion that there are consolidation periods following periods of hypyothesis testing. Ann mentions that these spurts are part of Adam's development as a young writer. Her comments indicate that she anticipates there to be more and that they seem to be a part of natural literacy development:

> Oh yea. There's probably only been half a dozen spurts like that at all yet. He's made a few times where he's said he really wants to be doing this story. Tries for a day or two.

While Ann readily supplies spellings for Adam, she remains very sensitive about creating a dependency on his part and wants to leave as much control of the writing as possible in his hands. Although Adam will ask for a whole word spelling, he will be satisfied with parts of it. Ann adds:

> Well, I really don't withold the information. If he really wants to know how to spell GRASS, I will just say, "G - R - A - S - S". Sometimes I do that but more often than not, I probably just say, "Do you want the whole word or is there a particular part you're stuck with?" Sometimes he writes something and says, "Is that right mum?" and I try to be as vague as I basically can.

It is apparent that Adam is aware of the use and occurrences of conventional spelling. He is developing understanding and knowledge about how that might be achieved. Ann's vagueness about passing value comments or responding in a manner that communicates right or wrong answers is interesting. On one hand it can be seen as an extremely sensitive way of dealing with a young child. On the other hand it has the potential to create dissonance with Adam when he encounters correct spelling in the print materials that are part of his daily life.

However, Ann observes that at this point Adam's criterion for what might constitute an acceptable piece is not one of correctness, but one of merely completing a piece:

> I think finishing it. He's happy to write that one word because that's what he can do and that recipe--he was real happy with it because it seemed big and he did the whole thing. He was happy with it because he had finished it and he read it to me.

Ann notes that Adam begins a number of pieces of writing that never get completed; many of these efforts take the form of stories. Interestingly enough, Adam attempts a number of story forms or narratives. Yet when he begins, it seems that he is not capable of seeing the story as a complete whole and gauging whether he will be able to complete it:

> I think that he doesn't yet have the--he can't yet decide--like when he wants to write this story this morning, he's not yet capable of seeing that that's something way too big for him. So it's luck if he happens to do something. He doesn't know before he starts it, whether it's possible or not.

Some of Adam's writing is narrative in its intent and when discussing the pieces, he can tell the remainder of the story that does not appear in print. In some cases, the title or one or two words seem sufficient to communicate the idea that the story is to tell. It is as though more of the narrative exists in the head for the child than does on paper. Certainly for the child, telling the story and talking about the story may be a more powerful means to enter into narrative than using a print mode. This is not unlike the children's book *Arthur's Story*, in which a little boy is relating a story to his sister. He gives, as far as the sister is concerned, the sparsest of details, yet for the child, his narrative represents quite a complete account. For Adam then, oral narrative is as useful as written narrative.

If Adam's attempts are interpreted in the context of Britton's model, it can be seen that he does not write narratives as a beginning step in his writing development. Narrative attempts form only a small part of his development and are representative of only one among a number of modes of writing that he is simultaneously learning and appreciating. In additon, the story forms are not personal and about present events. Adam's stories reflect story book forms. However, it can only remain as speculation that Adam is not yet capable of appreciating the qualities of a story. As he prepares to write his pieces, he demonstrates considerable understanding as he makes some choices. Ann details:

> I don't think it's clear to him before he starts it or I don't know if I should say that or not. He was clear that this was going to be a big story this morning, but he wasn't clear that it was an impossibility. When we got out a sheet of paper, that wasn't enough. We had to have three sheets folded in half and a cover on it. I'm surprised to see him take a pen and write so little (print size) this morning. I would have thought that he would use the Mr. Sketch pens. But then maybe that was the size of the task at hand. He saw himself writing a big story.

It may be then, that understanding of narrative develops in conjunction with other aspects of knowledge about written language and that the acquisition of this knowledge does not always manifest itself as a distinct form in early writing attempts.

Ann doubts that any of Adam's attempts at beginning narrative would ever be completed. The complete story for Adam may indeed be in his head and the print that he used in his attempts may be for him sufficient to represent the story idea. This is consistent with observations of composing by kindergarten children where it was noticed that, while a considerable amount of story telling and oral monitoring by the child accompanied the graphic work, and for lengthy periods of time, the actual print produced was minimal, perhaps a word or two, yet sufficient to represent the entire story idea (Coe, 1987). At this point in development this representation may be typical.

In a subsequent discussion about writing that was done at school, Ann expresses some reservations about the usefulness of the writing. Ann sees the school practice and home practice as quite different:

> When I look at it I can tell he made this picture and then someone said, "What do you want to write?" and most of the children in the kindergarten class are just dictating, but they've obviously suggested to him that maybe he would like to copy it over. He's trying to write differently than he writes himself. He's trying to use some lower case.

The example of the school writing serves to illustrate just how, with the very best of intentions on the part of well-meaning teachers, control can be taken away from the child. Topic choice, time, form and spelling are all beyond the grasp of the child. Dictation as a consistent practice in classrooms may warrant re-examination. The story for the child may be an unsaid part of the graphic work or drawing. Asking children to translate it into some written form necessitates that it be a convenient length for the teacher to write down, that doesn't take too long and isn't too demanding. It may be that the practice of asking for dictation is trivializing children's ideas or at least not appreciating the extent to which they are capable of making a story.

That researchers should be cautious of making inferences on the basis of written products alone is highlighted by the following incident. In a discussion about pieces of writing, Ann describes what she feels is the background to one particular bit of writing. The piece looks like a thermometer; it has a red line running the length of it and there are numbered intervals. Ann begins to provide evidence to suggest the home influences that have prompted Adam to include this in his writing. She relates:

> I mean we have a thermometer here. Every time I make yogurt or anything like that I have the thermometer around. But I don't think he did anything at school about thermometers. I think he knows it changes. You read the scale. But I'm not sure he knows that the bigger number means warmer. I doubt it actually.

However, things are not always as they seem. In a similar discussion with Adam, he explains that the piece is not a thermometer at all, but a speed control for his spaceship. The numbers are not to indicate temperature, but to show speed. If anything, this amusing aside points out the importance and usefulness of this study's methodology, using child and parent as informants, but incorporating triangulation as a means of verification.

During a conversation in the last meeting of the study, Ann indicates that she is certain that Adam is ready to read. While she has seen a difference in his reading ability over time, she is not as sure of any differences in his writing ability. She describes the role of reading materials in this development:

> He wants to. He's trying to a bit. He's had a book out on whales (from school). He knows the book; he's had it read to him enough times. But he tried to read it himself and was really excited when he actually joined up some words. Soon as he didn't know the words he made them up without any hesitation. But while they were joining up, you could just see him being really excited. It's the first time I've really

> noticed him doing that. He's really liking this (alphabet) book right now. He's looking at this to see which word is GOAT, GROCER and so on. That's fairly new for him to want to even bother trying that.

If reading and writing are complementary processes and knowledge about reading and writing processes arise simultaneously, it seems reasonable to assume that Adam has made just as striking progress in writing development as reading advancement. That the difference then may be one of an inabilty to observe written skills as readily as reading skills is illustrated in Ann's comment:

> Actually, I can see he's on the brink of reading. A lot closer than he was. As to whether his writing is much different, I don't know.

What Does Jean Say About Heather's Writing?

Jean begins with a description of school activities. To her, it seems that Heather is doing more writing at school than either Adam or Avaleigh. This may be because Jean is in contact with the classroom teacher more regularly than either of the other two parents and so is more aware of the writing that Heather is doing. In any event, Jean appears to speak less negatively about the school experience.

The writing that Heather does at school takes the form of captions for her drawings; quite likely, these captions are teacher directed or assisted. In free activity time Heather does engage in some writing as part of her play. This is different from either Adam or Avaleigh. Jean observes:

> Well, she's doing writing for pictures--journal writing. Now and then she comes home with little notes she has done in her free time and she writes with pictures. She writes letters at school, but then it's DEAR MUM and it's scribble, like she does with her bags. Often when she comes home we have many pieces of paper stuffed in that bag that are full of scribble and scrawling.

The audience for writing at home is described. Heather's writing for the most part involves letters to mother, father and a few close friends. Jean notes that special events that are of personal significance to Heather often give rise to the writing. Jean does not recall that Heather has written what might be called stories:

> She's writing letters--to people mostly. The letters are written to me mostly and to dad and to her friend John and Valentines right now. She wrote lots of Christmas cards and birthday cards. It's always correspondence actually. Now and then she did write--no, I don't think she's ever written a story as such. She might write invitations; it's always correspondence.

It appears from Jean's observations that Heather does not readily engage in writing that might be considered to be experimentation, that is , playing at writing. While there is writing as part of her play activities, Jean describes it as intentional, in that it always seems to be addressed to someone; yet this is in a sense a form of experimentation:

> When she's playing house or something with Graham (her brother), she'll just scrawl, scribble, like cursive writing--only loops on the page. And you'll find those stuffed in purses, stuffed away, but there are never any words. It maybe has a name on it, to whom it is intended. She's not experimenting, no.

Jean begins to give an account of Heather's development of writing ability over the past twelve months. The writing of whole words characterizes her present efforts, as opposed to the writing of single letters, an earlier behaviour. This recent development requires maintenance however. Jean observes that encouragement and support are critical to the continuation of this development and explains:

> That she's writing words. She wasn't writing words before: she was writing letters (alphabet). And only with constant input will she write new words.

Although she is writing, Heather feels a need to constantly check spellings; it is as if she needs verification of her present efforts in order to advance. Jean observes that Heather remains skeptical of the accuracy of her spelling attempts. She says:

> She was going to write HAPPY VALENTINES today, but she wouldn't sit here and sound it out herself. She has to say, "How do you spell it?" and then after each letter has to make sure that it is right.

This behaviour tends to corroborate Heather's earlier view of natural spelling, that it is not really the correct way to spell words but simply some tactic that adults have encouraged children to use. Heather is aware of the use and the need for conventional spelling and in some ways she demonstrates that she knows more about the process of writing than she does about how to actually write. About Heather's behaviour, Jean notes:

> In spite of the fact that I will not tell her the correct spellings in certain cases but she will check with me to see if that is the right spelling. She's not satisfied that that is the way it looks and that she's happy with that word when she's finished. It's got to be absolutely perfect.

The previous examples illustrate that Heather, in much the same manner as Avaleigh and Adam, is actively involved in the construction of knowledge about written language development. She is continually developing and testing hypotheses about how writing works. Heather has developed a spelling ability that represents a current accumulation of knowledge and understandings from a variety of sources. That Heather would have accepted and not questioned a spelling given by her mother six months ago indicates that her understanding of the structure of written language has changed and is indeed developing. New knowledge has forced Heather to re-evaluate her strategies and practices. Jean notes:

> She will ask if the word has got a silent E or something. Six months ago, she would have asked me how to spell a word and she wouldn't and couldn't sound out the word; now she can sound it out.

Jean's practice, however, is to encourage Heather to rely as much as possible on her own developing ability and to make her own spelling attempts. That Heather is not yet taking up Jean's gentle direction is indicated by this observation:

> Because I don't volunteer the information, for instance for Valentines, I'll say, "Well, you can spell that. Tell me what you hear." She will do it but after each letter that she writes down, she'll say, "VAH (sounds out) - V and then - A? (always with the tone of a question) and then, UHL (sounds out) - L?" It will be a question again.

In a discussion of activities or experiences that she feels are necessary to assist children with their writing development, Jean indicates the necessity of creating an environment and a climate that is conducive to allowing children to experiment. Of course, the physical necessities such as paper and pens must be available. Being read to is identified as important to writing development. Jean echoes Ann's sentiments that children do indeed ask serious questions and as such deserve serious responses. Their questions and requests for help denote a genuine need. Jean summarizes:

> They have to have the materials available always. Lots of pens and paper everywhere they go. They have to be read to and when they ask a question about what does something say, they have to always be answered.

Whereas responding to their questions is important, Jean feels that it is equally important to appreciate children's efforts at coming to terms with the complexity of written language and to encourage those efforts. While she has not yet been successful at having Heather fully realize this, Jean nevertheless continues to make attempts to reassure Heather that her spelling attempts are legitimate and valued:

> It has to be pointed out that that does indeed say something and that means something even though the letters are different. Because that is what Heather has noticed.

When Heather first became interested in print, Jean recalls that models in the environment did create some problems for Heather as she began to write:

> Actually at first, she did use to notice that there were different letters, but because of the way that they are done in advertising, she would be confused whether that was the same letter because they were written differently and then she was fascinated by cursive writing, so it all had to be tied in.

The question now becomes an intriguing one, that of whether or not writing models in the literate environment facilitate or interfere with Heather's beginning understandings of written language. A similar issue is whether or not that which is encouraged instructionally at school should reflect or differ from that which is encouraged at home. Perhaps these different messages about writing create dissonance for the child; perhaps they result in the production of different sets of hypotheses about the nature of written language that then have to be tested and resolved. Quite likely resolution lies somewhere in the middle. It may be that new information, as it is encountered, is fitted into the child's already existing and continually dynamic schema about written language. Adult interventions in the form of instruction and information gained from observations in the environment then become accommodated into this framework, much as Vygotsky (1986) has described in his discussion of the notion of the zone of proximal development.

The models of writing that Heather sees at home are pragmatic, and Heather's earlier account of what her parents do is accurate. Mother writes lists of various kinds and addresses and telephone numbers. Father is involved with writing pertaining to work as a teacher. Heather's sister is seen to write notes and letters. Moreover, Heather sees correspondence and receives some herself. Jean identifies other home writing as written recipes and labels for boxes and containers, and speculates that there is likely a relationship between the kinds of writing that Heather sees occurring at home and the types of writing that she actually produces. Heather seems to be using written language for social purposes, as Jean observes:

> Actually the kind of writing she does depends. I think to sit down and write a story for her own purpose hasn't come to surface yet. To write something to someone is much more impórtan to her, because she is a social being it seems.

Story writing as a form, is one that is not yet developed with Heather, nor is it expected by Jean. Jean has essentially a functional view of writing development, one that characterizes children as involved in writing for real purposes with real audiences. This notion would seem to run counter to what Britton suggests. From the account so far of Heather's writing development it appears that much writing may develop from functional or transactional intentions. In addition, given the wide variety of writing forms that Heather attempts, reservations about Britton's assumptions are legitimate.

The materials that are available in the home for Heather's use are detailed. In addition to the physical sorts of things that children need, Jean also emphasizes the importance of an area that is reserved for work to be seen. As Goodman (1985) insists, if writing is to be seen as important, it must be seen. Jean notes:

> Paper, pens, there is a typewriter. Stamps with letters, coloured pencils, crayons, thin markers, thick markers, paper-- different kinds and colours. A place to display the work, ón the fridge or the bulletin board over the work table. Actually the place most prized is the fridge for Heather.

Not only does Heather have preferences for where she likes her efforts to be displayed but she also has preferences for what materials she uses. While she generally uses big markers, Jean observes that Heather does discriminate among that which is available and often selects and picks materials that suit the job:

> Markers, big markers. With very small paper, she'd pick a pencil. We haven't had fine markers until recently, but lately she hasn't written with those, it's been pencil.

Illustration is not as prominent a feature of Heather's writing as it is with Adam's and Avaleigh's. The point at which Ann described as the stage where Adam was, that is, not yet ready to learn writing, seems to have been surpassed by Heather. When she is busy at writing, she usually writes. Pictures remain pictures with little written accompaniment. Jean gives a possible explanation that echoes Ann's choice of words when she characterized Adam's efforts as not yet "taking the task of writing to task":

> That's perhaps because writing is work right now. She's hard at work when she's writing. For her to sit down and describe what her picture is, would be just too tedious for her.

Perhaps a subtle implication here is that teachers might re-think the value of constantly asking children to tell about their drawings so that they can be transcribed and copied. Those decisions may be best left with the children.

Jean returns to the topic of writing at school and begins to make comparisons between home and school writing. The quality of school products is inferior to home products. One particular piece, a book consisting of related pictures with captions, is characterized by Jean as having been done as though it were a required task in class:

> She has written a book at school, but the book--it's not a story book. It has a picture, but not good pictures, and one says MUM. The next page is a picture and it says PAPA. And then JENNIFER, GRAHAM and ME. The pictures are second rate. It's as if she had to do five pages of this thing (crayon and scribble) and so she's gone and whipped through it.

This observation serves not only to point out once more the potential value of allowing children to exercise considerable control over their own writing, but also to exemplify some of the restraints under which young writers might be operating in schools.

Jean further describes aspects of Heather's writing behaviour. It seems that Heather does not have a particular favourite time during which she likes to write; rather she is busy at writing all the time. It is clearly an activity that is rewarding. Jean notes:

> Well, oddly enough at lunch time, she's usually very busy writing. She comes home from school and sits down and writes. And at other times, it's just whenever she feels like writing a letter.

There are similarities in Heather's and Avaleigh's behaviours in that gushes of personal feeling often prompt the writing of notes:

> She's waiting for supper and she suddenly feels like she loves me a lot, she will go and write me a love letter. She's waiting for her dad to come home, she will write him a love letter or if she happens to have seen something.

Again it is tempting to return to a classroom situation and to speculate how this desire to write, or the prompts for writing that seem to be operating, can be best accommodated in the regular program. Clearly time to write and an absence of emphasis on mastery of a required number of writing forms may be of service to children.

When Heather chooses to write she prefers some form of assistance. She does not compose in solitude, but instead prefers to have someone close at hand. That her behaviour supports Cazden's (1981) contention that writing for young children is a social activity is mirrored in this observation:

> She makes sure that there is someone around to help her with spelling. She doesn't go off and write by herself very rarely.

Heather has at her disposal a number of resources upon which she can draw to help her with her writing and her spelling. Unlike Adam, Heather readily turns to previously written material as a reference. Jean notes:

> If she's written the card beforehand, she'll check the words from it. Like if she has written HAPPY VALENTINES on the outside of the card, she'll write it on the inside and copy it from the outside.

When she spells, Heather relies on a gradually developing vocabulary of words that form for her a sight spelling vocabulary. These have come about as a result of repetition and patterns in her writing. Friends and family names are committed to memory. As Jean explains:

> She writes what she knows. So usually she will write TO. She knows how to do TO and the person's name, and she knows everyone in the family and at that point if she can't write what she wants to, she'll ask me and we'll go through the process of sounding out the words.

Mother gets involved and supplies words. However, Jean tries to do it in a manner that values and encourages Heather's efforts and at the same time remains sensitive to the frustrations that Heather often feels:

> I do when we get going. Usually we start out and when we get to five or six words she's getting frustrated and I give her the letters as she is sounding it out, as she is working through it.

The words that are part of her developing sight vocabulary and those that represent patterns in her writing inspire confidence in Heather. However, success in writing those words accurately does not seem to carry over to her independent efforts. Although Heather will attempt to sound out words, she appears to be unwilling to commit her efforts to the permanence of paper. Jean describes the continued need for reassurance and verification:

> The words that she knows, she is confident about, like she knows HAPPY and BIRTHDAY. Actually she's getting down to some correspondence; she can write HOW ARE YOU when she writes to John. But as soon as she runs into a word that she doesn't know, you have to be there to help her. But she is not easily frustrated by sounding things out. But she won't write the letter down until you say okay.

Heather prefers the help of another person when she writes. She occasionally turns to her sister for assistance but has skepticism about the reliability of those spellings. To overcome this, Heather relies again on mother to verify the information. Jean says:

> She has Jennifer although she doesn't trust Jennifer's spelling. She'll ask for Jennifer's spelling and then she'll check with me to see if it's okay.

Heather does have a personal dictionary at home. It is modelled after one used with primary school children, consisting of blank pages folded in half, with each of the letters of the alphabet written at the top of the page in upper and lower case letters. As words are requested by the child they are written by the child or an adult on the appropriate page. Jean explains that Heather has abandoned this as a resource.

While writing letters, invitations and correspondence form the majority of Heather's writing, copying of text from books, as Avaleigh and Adam do, is also part of Heather's practice. As Jean notes, it is usually a brief and seldom sustained activity:

> She has sat down with a book and decided to copy the whole book. They didn't get through the first page and of course couldn't read any of the words she'd written.

A more complete description of assistance that mother provides for Heather begins to unfold. Jean hopes that by not interfering too much she will be providing the best kind of support. Jean remains sensitive to not appearing as instructive or directive in her approach to Heather's writing efforts; rather she tries to invite her child to write. In fact, if it is something that she has suggested that Heather do, such as a thank you note following receipt of a present, Jean feels obligated to provide more assistance than she normally would if Heather were engaged in a piece of self-initiated writing. She describes her practice as follows:

> By not interfering too much I hope. I don't say, "That's a nice picture, let's write a story about it," or "I'm going to write you a note to remind you of this." I don't suggest that she write, ever, other than a thank you note that I might ask her to do, but I don't insist on it. If she does come around to it, I'll help her with it. I'll help her more with something I've asked her to do than I would if she initiates it herself.

Jean encourages Heather to be as independent as she can and helps her to sound out words as she needs them. However, there are times when it is more expedient to provide the complete spelling to Heather or to give her the word to copy. She does, however, feel slightly uncomfortable about that strategy and expresses reservation about the practice:

> I try to go through the slow process of spelling with her, but sometimes when things get chaotic, I just have to go and write it out for her to copy, but I feel that's a major cop-out when I have done that.

The best sort of help, and the times when writing flourishes, seem to be the times that the writing becomes a collaborative effort. Heather enjoys an adult's undivided attention. Jean observes:

> If I see that she is really into it, I will come and sit down with her and that's the best time for her, because she gets not just the back of me saying, "Yes, that's right". I guess my role is to be a resource but not to interfere.

Examples like the preceding illustrate only too clearly the facilitory practices in which parents engage in order to help children along the road to literacy development. The question remains unanswered as to how these situations can be duplicated or at least approximated in schools and classrooms.

In assessing the role and value of the help that she provides, Jean articulates a dilemma, one that is likely familiar to aware teachers of young children:

> I'll make her sound out a word and I actually feel very sorry for her when she insists that there is a silent E or something, when she knows that what she has written down, although it says what she wants it to say, she's not happy with that. She's not happy with the phonetic spelling. She wants to know if there is a silent E on the end of VALENTINE and she calls it a silent E.

The issue becomes one of how to approach correct versus appropriate spelling, keeping intact the integrity of the child's efforts. The notion of dependence versus independence raises similar issues. If parents, such as the ones participating in this study, iterate concerns such as these and they are dealing with only one or two children at a time, how enormous and daunting must be the task for classroom teachers.

Knowing about silent Es, from whatever sources - her sister, school instruction, literate environment or simply from Heather's own constructions, seems to prevent progress and immediate success. It is as though, in Heather's case, a little knowledge, that of silent Es, is indeed a dangerous thing.

Further influences in Heather's writing are identified. Not only has Jennifer, her older sister, provided some direct assistance in terms of spelling but Jean also notes a more generalized effect of collaborative writing activity that is not unlike the findings of some researchers. Milz (1982) contends that through social interaction both writing and speaking are mutually enhanced. Piazza and Tomlinson (1985) suggest that young children who engage in social interactions during writing learn fundamental principles of how writing works. During many play times, Heather and Jennifer write. Jean views the writing that gets lost as it were, the practice done on the blackboard as they play school, as important and constructive. While

Jennifer tries to emulate mother's sensitive practices, she is not as successful and falls into a more instructive role. Jean explains:

> She plays school with Jennifer sometimes and Jennifer will get her to write things. They'll have to copy things and actually it is things that you don't get on paper; they often do it on the blackboard and then rub it off. So a lot of times it's, "This is how you spell it; this is the right way." Jennifer sometimes tries to do it the way that I do it with Heather, but she gets frustrated too easily (with Heather).

The model that her older sister provides is like that of a writer in action rather than that of providing similar content as was seen in the case of Avaleigh and her older sister, Isla. Heather works at emulating the behaviour of older persons and playing at what they do. It is not important that the writing be communicative or have an audience; it reflects what real older writers do when thay write. It may be as Ivor Goodson (1987) observed about folk songs, what the singer does is more important than the song. Jean illustrates:

> No, actually I think that's when we get the invitations to the magic shows and the copying of books. She sees Jennifer working at a book. She started copying a page last week from the "Pets" book. She was writing about the care of horses and she had half a paragraph of this book copied and she didn't have a clue what it was about but she was busy working the way that she sees Jen doing it.

Jean recalls when Heather first became interested in print. Long before Heather could make sense of letter combinations in terms of her being able to read them, she would experiment with the typewriter, producing all sorts of combinations of letters. She would bring these to her parents with the very firm belief that sense could be made of them. Jean explains that Heather understood at an early age that a message can be represented:

> I think with Heather that it might be neat for her to have a typewriter at this point, because when she did use the typewriter (earlier), she'd come with a whole page of letters and ask, "What does this say? Does this say anything"? And I think at this point, she might be able to go through that mass of letters and find little pockets that she recognizes, patterns. She might recognize, "Hey, I've got the word IN here."

Valuing writing and valuing children's efforts, it seems , can have a positive effect on the production of writing. Interest is shown in writing done in Heather's home and as a result, Heather and her sister in turn respect their efforts. Jean notes:

> I think that the girls both know that writing is very valuable to us. And because of that, when something nice is done, it gets saved to show to papa. Things don't get

> thrown down. Heather is always putting envelopes by her dad's dinner plate. She is always very proud of something she has written; she treats it very well.

Jean speculates, as did Willo, about the role of the researcher's influence on writing production, highlighting very nicely the notion of writing as a valued activity:

> If she's given an envelope to put her writing in, you're going to get twice as much writing first of all and secondly, you're going to get every piece that has a letter on it. I feel sorry for the kids whose writing is not appreciated.

Jean concludes with her early memories of what it was like to be a child learning to write. Of writing at home she remembers:

> I can remember when I was a kid one summer when I got my desk (at home) and I spent the entire summer making newspapers--little articles in newspapers. But I don't know if anyone ever read them or even if that was important. I was probably 11 or 12 but I don't remember anything before that. I can remember colouring in colouring books, but I don't remember writing. I remember having to write thank you notes.

The classroom protocol, the ever-present standards and the mechanics are presented as reminiscences of writing at school:

> I can't remember learning to write. I was thinking about that today actually; it was drawing. I remember learning to read and that was hard. I have memories of frustrations. I remember that we couldn't write with a pen until we had ten gold stars with our pencil. I can remember the chart on the wall with the stars and I wasn't the first. The pens were ink pens and that was probably about grade 3 or grade 4. I imagine that I didn't have much problem learning to print. I remember experimenting, writing different ways, but I don't remember learning to write.

The three parents, Willo, Ann and Jean have illustrated in a number of ways how they have not only encouraged their children to become owners of text but also how they have allowed their children to become decision-makers in the creation of text. More importantly, they have striven to permit the full range of their children's language resources to blossom.

In the next chapter, the data are discussed from the perspective of what they might mean in the context of child behaviour, parent practice and theories of writing development. A new category scheme to describe the functions of writing is advanced in the context of the unique data from the present study.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discusses what the data mean in terms of child behaviour and parent practice. The theories of Britton and Moffet are re-examined in light of what has been reported. An additional typology of writing functions is advanced and explained in the context of the unique data from the present study. This chapter also presents the study's implications for teaching practice and for further research.

Discussion

It is useful to return to the analysis done in Chapter 4 in order to discuss what the data mean in the context of child behaviour, parent practice and theories of writing development. The results are best presented in terms of the areas of analysis, describing children's efforts as they pertain to context, audience, function and form.

Context

All three children do more writing that involves independent efforts than writing that makes use of some sort of assistance. In all cases, active construction of spellings, the use of previous print knowledge and the development of self-reliant strategies characterize these independent efforts. When the children seek assistance, it is very likely, for Adam and Heather, to be direct spelling and other print assistance provided orally by a family member, usually mother. For Avaleigh, however, help comes in the form of a written model, usually provided by mother, to copy. These apparent differences in child strategies and parent practice are of course related and it is difficult to ascertain whether parent decisions dictate child strategy or whether parent practice follows cues provided by what the child does.

Audience

There is a scarcity of writing that can be identified as having an audience of self exclusively. Rather, 9 out of 10 pieces of writing that the children did are intended for an audience beyond the self. This suggests that, contrary to Moffet's contentions, young children do perceive and indeed appreciate an audience that is somewhat distant and on occasion, unknown. It seems that young writers then are not limited to an intimate audience; Avaleigh, Adam and Heather appear to have little difficulty decentring to address an other than immediate and familiar. In fact, nearly one-third of the children's efforts are done with a general or wide public audience in mind.

For Avaleigh and Heather, the family is seen as an important audience for one-third to one-half of their writing; for Adam, the family is a less important consideration. The remainder of Heather and Avaleigh's writing is intended either for friends or classmates. Adam is unique in that close to 8 out of 10 pieces of writing involve an audience remote from himself and he produces little or no writing that is intended for familiar or immediate audiences. His writing also demonstrates a range of appropriation; Moffet's theory of writing development underestimates his range of possibilities.

Function

According to Britton, children's early writing efforts should be undifferentiated in function. In addition, the conception of the expressive function of language occupies a central and beginning point in writing development. When the writing done by the children is examined as a whole, an equal split between expressive and transactional writing is noted; children are just as likely to write for these dual functions. Instances of poetic writing are virtually non-existent. For Avaleigh and Heather, this roughly equal split between expressive and transactional writing holds, but once again, Adam is unique. Nearly two-thirds of his writing can be characterized as transactional. That Adam was seen earlier to appreciate somewhat more distant audiences does not make this finding surprising. It appears that, as his mother has previously noted, Adam "takes the task of writing to task." Categorization of the data does not support Britton's contention that children's early writing is undifferentiated as to function. This claim is strengthened later in this chapter when an additional category scheme to describe the many functions of written language used by the children in this study is presented and described.

Form

Britton contends that the primary starting point for young writers is the story, while Moffet postulates that beginning writers are limited to a narrative form. The children, as a group, wrote an overwhelming amount of non-narrative writing; less than 1 piece in 10 is narrative in form. Both Avaleigh and Heather's writing is consistent with these observations, whereas Adam's efforts indicate narrative attempts in about one-quarter of his writing.

But it is when the range of forms, that is, the different kinds of writing that the childern have produced, are examined that the distinctions within the category of non-narrative writing become intriguing. The children display facility with a dizzying array of forms ranging from letters to lists, from cards to signs, from puzzles to games and from musical scores to recipes. Britton's and Moffet's claims about the primacy of story fail to accommodate these types of writing.

An Additional Category Scheme

During analysis of the data, it became quickly apparent that simply describing the function of children's writing in the context of Britton's theory was inadequate. The children demonstrated considerable versatility in making decisions both about purposes of their writing and about appropriate conventions for each form that they produced. To accommodate the writing function data arising from the present study, it seems productive to propose an additional framework.

The three children in the present study used writing to serve a number of functions. While samples of children's writing contributed to the development of the new category scheme, the contextual details surrounding the writing provided by both children and parents were instrumental in the refinement of the classification scheme. As mentioned earlier, it was from informed speculation about writer's intent that the category of function was developed.

While a total of 59 different functions were identified from the total sample of 296 pieces of writing, the functions seemed to fall roughly within eight categories. The same criticisms and cautions that have been directed at the schemes of other researchers apply here. While it might be noted that some of the categories seem to have few descriptors, the total number of samples that lead to the formulation of the category was quite substantial and recurring. The categories and descriptions of writing function are as follows:

1. Social - a) Personal: Written language was used in these cases to establish or maintain social relationships. Writing that was intended to display affection was included in this category, as was writing that accompanied gifts. Love letters and friendly letters comprised most of this writing.

Social - b) Impersonal: This was writing done to establish or maintain impersonal relationships and to conduct business. Typically involving an unknown audience, it included such writing as letters to magazines, restaurant signs and fortunes.

2. Interactional - a) Invitational: Writing done for interactional purposes always had an intended specific audience. Demands were made by the writer, but the demands were of a passive nature, that is, more in the form of requests or invitations. Writing was used to invite response, solicit replies or ask questions. The child sought approval, made requests, expressed preferences and invited participation through this kind of writing. Replies to requests and questions were seen to be serving interactional purposes.

   Interactional - b) Regulatory: An intended specific audience was identified for written language that served this function. Demands were made by the writer, but the demands were of an active nature, that is, they were used to control or direct the audience. Writing that was intended to give directions, direct attention, command or warn typified writing used for this purpose. The child also challenged, controlled or directed another's actions through this writing. Writing that gave permission, directed participation or persuaded was included in this category.

3. Self-oriented: Written language was used to show ownership or assert presence. The child also used this writing to announce intentions or to amuse or entertain. Pictures and designs with name, notes about self and puzzles and games were categorized as serving a self-oriented function.

4. Representational: Writing used for this purpose was intended to convey information or meaning with a minimum of textual explanation. Writing such as signs, labels and maps was used to identify persons or their belongings, to show another's ownership and to record locations. Labelling locations, aspects, objects and pictures was seen in writing done for representational purposes.

5. Informational: This was writing that was intended to provide information for the reader. The child sought information, recorded the same and announced necessary information through the use of this writing. Lists, charts, calendars and menus created by the child show writing used to plan, to represent information and to monitor actions as part of informational writing.

6. Knowledge-oriented: This writing concerns factual knowledge that the child knows, and includes writing intended to both inquire about knowledge and to demonstrate knowledge.

7. Experimental: This is writing that is done as part of the child's attempts to understand what is being learned. Writing to explore print or to experiment with print through the use of different forms such as musical notation or cursive writing is included in this category. Strings of unrelated letters and words are observed as the child practices letters and words as part of writing that serves experimental functions.

8. Narrative: This writing involves describing or telling information in essentially a story form. The child uses narrative written language to record experiences and events or to detail observations about events. Telling an original story or re-telling a familiar story exemplify the use of written language for narrative purposes. The child writes captions, books and diaries as part of writing that is seen to be narrative in function.

The additional category scheme is not original because it is informed by and incorporates notions from other frameworks. As a result the new scheme overlaps somewhat with other classification schemes that have been presented and discussed earlier in the thesis. Similarly, the new categories are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. The intention was to develop a comparable typology that seemed to best fit the unique data of the present study and one that was suited best to describing the functions of written language as seen in the data of the present study.

Summary

What has been presented in this thesis is a description of the continuing literacy development of three young children. A number of claims, supported by evidence from the present study, can now be made about the writing behaviour of young children as they come to terms with something as complex and dynamic as written language acquisition.

It is apparent, as DeFord (1980) observes, that when young children first begin to write, their actions are guided by an amazing storehouse of knowledge. They encounter print before they are able to read and yet somehow manage to organize these continual encounters in such a way as to develop fundamental concepts about both reading and writing.

Goodman (1985), musing about writing development in the context of a literate society, articulates three principles of writing knowledge, particularly relevant to the present findings, that children discover, develop and learn to control. Functional principles are developed as children come to see the uses and needs for written language in their everyday lives; they solve the problem of how writing is used and the purposes and significance that writing serves for themselve and others. Linguistic principles develop as children explore how written language is organized so that shared meanings become a significant feature of their efforts; they learn the conventional and pragmatic rules of written language. Relational principles develop as children come to understand how it is that written language can represent ideas, concepts and objects in their world; they learn what written language eventually means. Goodman (1985) cautions however, that "development does not always result in a better product. It is related to the ability to generate a message that shows that the writer is in control and is exploring ways of expressing meaning" (p. 18).

The importance of the process of on-going hypothesis testing about the nature of written language is highlighted by the results of the present study. Orthographic, graphophonic, syntactic and semantic hypotheses are simultaneously generated and tested as children develop awareness of how written language works. Attempts to describe young children's writing strategies have revealed a general, but complicated developmental pattern as children move to conventional orthography. Sulzby and Teale (1985) suggest that the process of development is complicated because children simultaneously hold a number of hypotheses about writing in their repertoire. Unlike Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982), who propose that children move from one writing system to another in a defined developmental fashion, giving up one set of hypotheses in order to move to a more sophisticated set, Sulzby and Teale (1985) assert, as has been observed in the present study, that children explore principles simultaneously: "The same child may use scribble for one story, letter strings for another, write his name conventionally, and write a list of words in a mix of conventional and invented spellings" (p. 10).

Similarly, the children in the present study demonstrate that they possess wisdom and understanding that is, at times, beyond the expectation of adults. These young writers are capable of making functional differentiations within their writing; they do write for a variety of purposes and show awareness of the necessary conventions for the forms that they choose. The primary starting point for these beginning writers is not always the story; their early writing is not always in the narrative form. The children in the present study attempt a wide range of functions and kinds of writing and do not learn to write exclusively by attempting stories.

Perhaps this attention to writing as story relates closely to school instruction. When children need help in their writing, they are often given story starters. As Newkirk (1984) observes, "The road to literacy, they soon learn, is paved with narratives" (p. 346). Not all beginning writers write for an immediate audience only, but can decentre to address an audience other than themselves. The children in the present study show that they can differentiate not only writer and audience, but that they can also distinguish various kinds of audiences; the expanding world of audience is reflected in their writing.

Implications for Teaching

While the present findings offer preliminary, albeit detailed descriptions of young children's writing, at least three issues relevant to classroom practice are suggested.

The first concerns the enormous variety of the kinds of writing that these young children are seen to do. It may be that young children's writing abilities have often been underestimated by both curriculum and uninformed classroom practice. So much of what children are capable of doing, while it can be learned by youngsters, may not be amenable to being taught as such. The task then for the teacher becomes one of how to best understand the diversity in children's writing and how to stimulate, encourage and accommodate writing of all different kinds and for different purposes in the classroom. Instructional strategies emphasizing the premises that children learn to write best by writing and that writing practice in the classroom might build the purposes for such writing with real audiences may help children to find frequent and real opportunities for such writing with real audiences.

The second issue relates to the notion of classroom environment. The present findings point to the importance of a print-rich, supportive home environment. Birnbaum (1980), in a comparative study of home and school environments, identifies two important features shared by the backgrounds of proficient writers. The first is the presence of a role model who, through regular writing as part of everyday transactions, conveys the value of such behaviour. The second is the availability of an audience that evidences interest and responds to the child's productions. In each setting, children have a different set of language options to explore and a different set of expectations to meet. The task for the teacher then, becomes one of how to duplicate or at least approximate, the conditions that seem to be in the home setting that allow writing to flourish. When models of writing and writing behaviour become an integral part of the classroom world, children are given the opportunity to see that writing is a valued activity. Writing benefits from response; teachers can be audiences themselves, but more importantly, can create real audiences within the school context. Typical home activities of early writers might be extended to schools in part by fostering peer interactions, creating a community of writers and readers. Moreover, classroom writing may be in greater need of appreciation than it is in need of evaluation.

A third issue addresses a broader notion, that of writing curricula. Developing comparative frameworks or engaging in a comparative study of writing at home and writing at school gains little in the context of the present research. However, taking a closer look at what it is that children can do as they begin to write, in order to gain further insight into writing processes, cannot help but inform curriculum development in a constructive manner. It is within the parameters of assisting with curriculum building that discussion of any comparative data is couched.

The argument used to support the thesis, in its simplest form, has followed this line. Children are observed to do x. Some current theories of child development indicate that children do y. Some current school curricula are based on y. Perhaps these curricula might be better informed by x.

The findings of the present study cast some doubt upon certain aspects of the theoretical models of writing development put forth by James Britton and James Moffet. These models of writing development characterize beginning writers as somewhat restricted in their capabilities in early writing. The Ministry of Education for Ontario (1982) currently advocates an approach to writing that is grounded in a functional view of writing as proposed by Britton (1970, 1975) and as such, depicts beginning writers as far more limited than has been shown to be the case.

The Ministry of Education for Ontario (1982) contends that while some children, when entering school, have been introduced to the initial stages of writing through printing names and copying out of books, most come equipped only with some control of oral language and an acquaintance with other forms of self-expression. A curriculum model is proposed by the Ministry that emphasizes one specific type of writing, "expressive" that naturally leads to more sophisticated forms of writing, poetic and transactional.

Such a simplistic linear model as that proposed by the Ministry may not develop curriculum that takes into account what children already know and so underestimates the extent to which the beginning writer is already developing a schema about the phenomena of print.

A more adequate model, in which the pragmatic functional nature of writing is seen to occupy a position of prominence, may be supported by analysis of data from the present study. It may be that the kinds of writing encountered at school develop as a result of the understandings that the child already possesses upon school entry. A model that illustrates the interactive nature of home and school writing is perhaps more appropriate to the development of meaningful early writing curricula.

Implications for Research

The present findings suggest at least three issues for consideration. The first concerns the importance and role of context in writing development. Graves (1981) argues that contexts must be broadened to include closer and longer looks at children as they are writing, and that these contexts must be described in greater detail. While case studies such as the present work, of specific, limited numbers of children are important to begin to develop data that can then lead to generalizations about many children, child behaviour needs to be described and detailed in the context of longitudinal studies. Moreover, research that focuses on the social context for learning about writing must be continued. Mason and Allen (1986) suggest that comparisons of home and school culture and of the roles played by parents and teachers must be explored. In addition, the nature of the interactions in which children engage at home and at school must be identified if children's attempts at written language acquisition are to be fully understood. Further studies that examine the writing behaviour of young children as they encounter a wider range of settings and audiences and as they use different forms of writing for different purposes, may serve to reveal some of the adjustments that children make that reflect the influence of these contextual factors.

A second issue concerns the design of studies having the child as referrent and as informant. The present findings suggest that it may be inappropriate to make conclusions about children's writing or their behaviour based on adult perceptions. Similarly, inferences based solely on assessment of written products may direct research unproductively. Finding out what children do by asking children themselves may be a more productive way to either describe products or to develop process insights. Hudson (1986) insists that "if we are to determine the features of writing contexts which are salient for children, we can and must ask the children themselves" (p.311). But as Clark and Florio (1983) concede, written language acquisition is difficult for participants to fully decsribe or reflect upon. The task for the researcher then, is to develop methods that investigate writing as a dynamic activity within the literate community. Literate others then become informants.

The third issue concerns an examination of both environmental influences and emergent writing behaviour of children who do not find themselves in a supportive situation. The findings of the present study suggest that children learn about the purposes of written language through attempts to make sense of written language for themselves. Refinement of this understanding is then accomplished in the context of various social interactions. Concepts, values and attitudes to writing become meaningful to the child if they are nurtured at home. The task for the researcher then, is to develop better ways to examine the developmental behaviour of young children from backgrounds with different cultural values. Data that describe these less than conducive contexts must be collected. Although educators can do little about children's non-academic environments, information gained from these settings can serve to better shape academic environments.

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Appendix A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHILD

These questions are meant to be used as a guideline. Answers are likely best obtained with indirect techniques; full accounts are unlikely to be given by posing each question individually. The questions address important areas identified by Hudson (1984).

1. What can you tell me about the writing that you are doing at school this year?
2. What can you tell me about the writing that you usually do at home? If I came to your home right now, what pieces of your writing might I find?
3. How do you usually decide to write about something?
4. How do you get ideas? What topics do you like to write about?
5. Is there one kind of writing that you do a lot of? How often?
6. Do you use writing when you pretend or make believe? How?
7. When do your mum and dad write? When does your teacher write?
8. What kinds of things do children need to know to learn to write?
9. Are you a good writer? How do you know that? What is a good writer?
10. What is grown-up writing like?
11. How do you suppose grown-ups decide what to write about?
12. If I were a child and you were the teacher, what things would you teach me to help me learn to write?
13. Would I have to know how to read before I could learn to write?
14. Did you learn to read or write first?
15. What do you remember about learning to write?

Useful information was elicited by examining samples of written work; the child was asked to comment about the pieces of writing. The following questions provided guidance:

1. Please show me some of your writing. What do you remember about when you did these? Where did you do these?
2. Please tell me about each piece.
3. Tell me about your.....
4. What made you (why did you decide to) write about.....?

5. What did you think about as you began to write your.....?
6. Why did you put a .....?
7. What do you like best about your.....?
8. Who has seen this.....? Would you like to show it to anybody else?

Appendix B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PARENT

1. What can you tell me about the writing that your child is doing in school this year? Previous years?
2. What can you tell me about the writing that your child does at home this year? Previous years?
3. What do you remember about when he/she first became interested in print?
4. What kinds of activities or experiences do you feel children need to have to assist them with their writing?
5. What kinds of writing does your child see you or others doing at home?
6. What materials are available at home for use in writing? Preferred? Used most often?
7. What have you noticed about the times that your child chooses to do writing? What strategies are used? What resources are employed? What does your child do?
8. What resources does your child use to help with his/her writing?
9. How do you see that you help your child with his/her writing?
10. Have your child's siblings influenced in any way his/her writing? Friends? Relatives? Neighbours? Other significant people?
11. What early memories do you have about what it was like to be a child learning to write?
12. Is there anything else you want to tell me about writing in your home?

Appendix C. ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S WRITING SAMPLES

APPENDIX C
ANALYSIS OF AVALEIGH'S WRITING SAMPLES

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1] AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2] FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3] FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
1.	list	alone	previous knowledge of print	just know how to spell them	other (unknown) G self	to demonstrate knowledge; to practice known	T	NN
2.	list		previous knowledge of print	know how to spell them; learn by practice	other (unknown) G self	to demonstrate knowledge; to practice known words	T	NN
3.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
4.	love letter	alone			other (Dad & Mom)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
5.	love letter	alone			other (Sister)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
6.	love letter	alone			other (Mum & Dad)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
7.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
8.	love letter	alone			other (Mum & Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
9.	story in book form	alone; at school	book done by her sister	wanted to write like her sister	other (unknown) G self	to express a preference	E	N

[1] UK = unknown
G = general
W = wide

[2] E = expressive
P = poetic
T = transactional

[3] N = narrative
NN = non-narrative

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3]FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
10.	picture with name	working with a friend	personal knowledge		self other (unknown) G	to show ownership	E	NN
11.	love letter	alone			other (unknown) UK	to display affection	E	NN
12.	info. note about self (personal) (name, age)	alone	previous knowledge of print	how old she is	self other (unknown) UK	to demonstrate knowledge; to assert presence	T	NN
13.	love letter	alone		for her grandparents	other (grandparents)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
14.	love letter	alone	previous knowledge of print	for her hamster	other (pet hamster)	to demonstrate knowledge; to display affection	T E	NN
15.	sign	with Mom			other (unknown) G	to label an object	T	NN
16.	sign	with Mom			other (unknown) G	to label an object	T	NN
17.	love letter	alone		for her Sister	other (Sister)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
18.	love letter	alone			other (Dad & Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
19.	love letter	alone		for Mum, with an addressed card	other (Mum)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3]FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
20.	info. note about alphabet	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to practice print; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN
21.	love letter	with Mum and Sister	Dad's birthday		other (Dad)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
22.	puzzle	alone		made as alphabet puzzles to be	self other (unknown) G	to entertain or amuse; to challenge	T	NN
23.	friendly letter	alone, with Mum's help	Christmas season, parent-modeling	to have something sent back in return	other (friends, relatives)	to maintain social relationship; to solicit a reply	E T	NN
24.	love letter	alone			other (friend)	to display affection	E	NN
25.	commercial alphabet stickers	alone	commercial materials to use with crafts		self other (unknown) UK	to experiment with print; to practice print	T	NN
26.	info. note about self (name)	alone	craft activity		other (unknown) G	to assert presence; to show ownership	T	NN
27.	info. note about alphabet	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to practice print; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN
28.	love letter	alone			other (unknown) G	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
29.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3]FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
30.	love letter	alone			other (Mum & Dad	to display affection	E	NN
31.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
32.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
33.	picture with name	alone			other (unknown) G	to show ownership	E	NN
34.	commercial alphabet stencil	alone	commercially available stencil		self other (unknown) G	to experiment with print; to practice print	T	NN
35.	commercial alphabet stencil	alone	commercially available		self other (unknown) UK	to experiment with print; to practice print	T	NN
36.	commercial alphabet stencil	alone	commercial stencil		self other (unknown) UK	to experiment with print; to practice print	T	NN
37.	commercial alphabet stencil	alone			self other (unknown) UK	to experiment with print; to practice print	T	NN
38.	commercial alphabet stencil	alone	commercial stencil		self other (unknown) UK	to experiment with print; to practice print	T	NN
39.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
40.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection;	E	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1] AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2] FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3] FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
41.	picture with name	alone			other (unknown) G	to show ownership	E	NN
42.	love letter	alone			other	to display affection	E	NN
43.	love letter	alone			other (Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
44.	love letter	alone			other (Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
45.	love letter (welcome home)	alone			other (Dad)	to display affection; to maintain social relationship	E	NN
46.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to experiment with print; to practice with print	T	NN
47.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to experiment with print; to practice with print	T	NN
48.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to experiment with print; to practice with print	T	NN
49.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to experiment with print; to practice with print	T	NN
50.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to experiment with print; to practice with print	T	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3]FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
51.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to experiment with print; to practice with print	T	NN
52.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to experiment with print; to practice with print	T	NN
53.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to experiment with print; to practice with print	T	NN
54.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled from alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to experiment with print; to practice with print	T	NN
55.	puzzle	alone	modeled from alphabet	a surprise for Mother; a puzzle to be put in the right order	other (Mum)	to entertain or amuse; to challenge	T	NN
56.	information note about numbers, musical notes	alone		to write numbers	self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to practice with print	T	NN
57.	love letter	alone	previously written words	just a list of different words that she copied	self other (unknown) G	to practice with print; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN
58.	love letter	alone, in a craft activity			other (Mum & Dad)	to display affection;	E	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3]FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
59.	love letter	alone	previously written words		other (adult) friend	to display affection; to maintain social relationship; as a gift	E	NN
60.	love letter	alone			other (Mum & Dad)	to display affection	E T	NN NN
61.	love letter	alone			other	to display affection	E	NN
62.	cards (x 22)	alone Mother provided written model	Valentines time		other (classmates)	to maintain social relationships	E	NN
63.	info. note about music (10 sheets)	alone	piano lessons and music book	pictures of musical notes and how they can be read	self other (unknown) W	to experiment with print forms; to display knowledge	T	NN
64.	list	with Mother	weekly chore, modeling by Mother	that was what she needed at home. She wanted to do Mum's grocery list	self	to organize information; to record necessary information; to monitor actions	T	NN
65.	list	alone, Mother provided written model	impending birthday festivities		self	to organize information; to record necessary information; to monitor actions	T	NN
66.	X (Mum's written model)							

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3]FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
67.	"	alone, from Mother's written model	birthday celebration	guests were to phone to indicate if they were coming	other (friends)	to maintain social relations; to request participation; to solicit a reply	T	NN
68.		over four days						
69.		"	"	"	"	"	"	"
70.					(friends)			
71.								
72.								
73.								
74.								
75.								
76.	label	alone, on the computer		she did it all by herself	self other (unknown) G	to entertain or amuse; to label a picture; to demonstrate knowledge	E T	NN
77.	number facts with name	alone, playing school			self other (unknown) G	to practice with print; to show ownership	T	NN
78.	love letter	alone			other (unknown) UK	to display affection;	E	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3]FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
79.	info. note about self (name)	alone			self other (unknown) G	to assert presence; to show ownership	T	NN
80.	love letter	alone			other (Dad)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
81.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
82.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
83.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
84.	info. note (q's & a's)	alone			other (unknown) G	to ask a question to invite a response	T	NN
85.	info. book (q's & a's)	alone	previously written forms		other (unknown) G	to ask a question; to invite a response	T	NN
86.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection; to ask a question; to invite a response	E T	NN NN
87.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection; to maintain social relationship	E	NN
88.	book	alone	a library book in similar vein	chose book format because Sister has been making them	other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to inquire about knowledge; to challenge	T	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1] AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2] FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3] FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
89.	alphabet book page	alone	from a library book	traced it	other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to explore knowledge of print	T	NN
90.	love letter	alone		made it as a present	other (Mum & Dad)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
91.	love letter	alone, on the computer			self other (unknown) G	to display affection; to label a picture	E T	NN
92.	commercial alphabet stencils	alone	commercial stencil		self other (unknown) UK	to experiment with print; to practice print	T	NN
93.	commercial alphabet stencils	alone	commercial stencil		self other (unknown) UK	to experiment with print; to practice print	T	NN
94.	info. note about self (name)	alone	commercial stencil		self other (unknown) UK	to assert presence; to show ownership	T	NN
95.	list	alone		some of her favourite letters	self other (unknown) UK	to practice with print; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN
96.	info. note (letters)	alone		it is her favourite letter	self other (unknown) UK	to assert presence; to demonstrate knowledge; to practice with print	T	NN
97.	info. note about music	alone	piano lessons, music book		self other (unknown) G	to experiment with print forms; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1] AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2] FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3] FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
98.	game	alone, part of a matching game	other games she has made	things that are the same have to be matched	other other (unknown) G	to entertain or amuse to challenge	T	NN
99.	miscellaneous letters	alone	previous knowledge of print	just letters that she spelled	self other (unknown) UK	to demonstrate knowledge; to practice with print	T	NN
100.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
101.	love letter	alone			other (unknown) UK	to display affection;	E	NN
102.	geometric shapes with name	alone			other (unknown) G self	to show ownership	T	NN
103.	design with name	alone			other (unknown) G self	to show ownership	T	NN
104.	love letter	alone			other (Brother)	to display affection	E	NN
105.	info. note about self	alone			other (unknown) G self	to show ownership; to assert presence	T	NN
106.	musical notes with name	alone			self other (unknown) G	to show ownership	T	NN
107.	scribbles with name	alone			self other (unknown) G	to show ownership	T	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3]FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
108.	list	alone	possibly copied from previously written words		self other (unknown) UK	to practice with print; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN
109.	love letter	alone			other (unknown) UK	to display affection	E	NN
110.	miscellaneous words	alone	previous knowledge of print		self other (unknown)	to experiment with print; to practice with print;	T	NN
111.	alphabet book page	alone	previous knowledge of print, modeled on alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to experiment with print; to demonstrate knowledge; to practice print	T	NN
112.	address stamp	alone	a rubber address stamp		self other (unknown) W	to entertain or amuse; to assert presence	T	NN
113.	love letter	alone			other (unknown) UK	to display affection	E	NN
114.	love letter	alone	previously written forms		other (unknown) UK	to display affection	E	NN
115.	love letter	alone			other (Mum & Dad)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
116.	design with a name	alone			self other (unknown) G	to show ownership	T	NN
117.	love letter	alone			other (Mum & Dad)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN

AVALEIGH

SAMPLE	KIND	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]FUNCTION (BRITTON)	[3]FORM (MOFFET & BRITTON)
118.	love letter	alone			other (Mum & Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
119.	friendly letter	alone			other (adult friend)	to direct other's actions; to maintain social relationship	T E	NN
120.	story in book form	alone	previous knowledge of book format		self other (unknown) G	to record information; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN
121.	story in book form	alone	previous knowledge of book format		self other (unknown) G	to recount events; to give details	E	N
122.	story in book form	alone	previous knowledge		self other (unknown) G	to give details; to recount events	E	NN

APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF ADAM'S WRITING SAMPLES

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
1.	miscellaneous letters	over 2 days with a friend	previous knowledge of print	it is practice with letters, to learn how, to show the researcher	self other (adult friend)	to practice with print; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN
2.	story in book form	alone, parent help with dictation and scribing	grandparents have a video cartoon	wanted to remember the story	self other (unknown) G	to record events; to recount a story	E	NN
3.	board game	with Sister, part of play	other board games at home		self other (unknown) W	to entertain or amuse; to direct other's actions; to challenge	T	NN
4.	sign	Mother assisted playing a hunting game with a friend			other (unknown) W	to warn; to direct attention	T	NN
5.	sign	playing a hunting game with a friend	previous sign		other (unknown) W	to warn to direct attention	T	NN
6.	love letter	with Sister's help			other (Mum)	to direct or persuade; to display affection	T E	N

[1] UK = unknown
G = general
W = wide

[2] E = expressive
P = poetic
T = transactional

[3] N = narrative
NN = non-narrative

ADAM

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1] AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2] BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3] MOFFET'S SCHEME
7.	miscellaneous words	alone	previous book knowledge	because he knew how to write	self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to label a scene	T	NN
8.	story in book form	with Mother's help and alone	previous book knowledge	writing takes up a lot of space	self other (unknown) G	to retell a story; to record events	E	N
9.	info. note about self (name)	part of dramatic play	previous book knowledge	wrote it to go with his dramatic play	self other (unknown) G	to record event; to assert presence	T	NN
10.	recipe	alone	follows the experience of creating the food		self other (unknown) W	to record an experience; to give directions	T	NN
11.	label	alone			other (unknown) UK	to label an object	T	NN
12.	story in book form	alone	had seen the movie	he is going to be staying over at friend's house where he last saw the the movie	self other (unknown) G	to recount a story; to record events	E	N
13.	directions	alone	previously read library book	it is a map for games	self other (unknown) W	to entertain; to direct; to command; to challenge	T	NN
14.	speed control device	alone, part of play on his climber			self other (unknown) G	to control; to direct	T	NN

ADAM

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
15.	friendly letter	with teacher direction and dictation	school-wide theme	it was copied	other (Sister)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
16.	card (birthday)	alone	Mother's birthday		other (Mum)	to display affection; to maintain social relationships	E	NN
17.	recipe, book format	alone			self other (unknown) W	to give directions	T	NN
18.	map	with Sister, as part of play	little china animals that the children were given	a map to remind him of the animal's whereabouts in the house	self other (unknown) W	to record location; to give directions	T	NN
19.	story in book form	alone, Mother assists	previously read book	this is just a story	self other (unknown) G	to tell a story	E	N
20.	story in book form	alone, Mum helps	previously read book		self other (unknown)	to retell a story	E	N
21.	X							
22.	play money	with Sister, as part of restaurant play	follows a visit to the Top Dog restaurant		other (unknown) W	to maintain impersonal relationships; to conduct business	T	NN

ADAM

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
23.	napkins	with Sister, part of play	restaurant visit	they are just decoration things	other (unknown) W	to conduct business; to maintain impersonal relationships	T	NN
24.	fortune	alone, part of play at fortune telling		it can be for anybody	other (unknown) W	to provide information	E	NN
25.	sign	part of play, making a zoo scene			other (unknown) W	to give directions	T	NN
26.	sign	alone, as part restaurant play		a sign for the restaurant	other (unknown) W	to label a location; to provide information	T	NN
27.	story in book form	alone	a library book of the same name	he is just copying	self other (unknown) G	to record story; to retell events	E	N

APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF HEATHER'S WRITING SAMPLES

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
1.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
2.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection; as a gift	E	NN
3.	info. note about self	alone			self other (unknown) G	to assert presence; to give information	T	NN
4.	musical score	alone	playing piano, music books	the name of the notes you need	self other (unknown) G	to record information; to experiment with print forms	T	NN
5.	musical score	alone	musical knowledge		self other (unknown) W	to record information; to give directions; to experiment with print forms	T	NN
6.	list	alone	copied from environment	it's a list of words	self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to practice known words	T	NN
7.	poem	alone	seasonal poem, copied		self other (unknown) G	to experiment with form	P	N

[1] UK = unknown
G = general
W = wide

[2] E = expressive
P = poetic
T = transactional

[3] N = narrative
NN = non-narrative

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
8.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection;	E	NN
9.	invitation magic show	alone, with Sister as part dramatic play			other (Dad)	to maintain personal relationship; to invite participation	T	NN
10.	invitation to magic show	alone, with Sister as part of dramatic play	previous print message		other (Mum)	to maintain personal relationship; to invite participation	T	NN
11.	label	alone			self other (unknown) UK	to label a scene; to practice with print	T	NN
12.	friendly letter	alone	seasonal theme knowledge of book format		(friend) other self	to maintain personal relationship; to detail observations	T E	 N
13.	birthday greeting (self)	alone	her own birthday		self	to entertain self	E	NN
14.	birthday greeting (self)	alone	her own birthday		self	to entertain self	E	NN
15.	birthday greeting (self)	alone	her own birthday		self	to entertain self	E	NN
16.	birthday greeting (self)	alone	her own birthday		self other (unknown) G	to entertain self; to assert presence	E T	NN

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
17.	birthday greeting (self)	alone	her own birthday		self other (unknown) G	to entertain self; to assert presence	E T	NN
18.	love letter	alone			other (Aunt)	to display affection	E	NN
19.	love letter	alone			other (Aunt)	to display affection	E	NN
20.	birthday greeting (self)	alone	her own birthday		self	to entertain self	E	NN
21.	love letter	alone			other (Aunt)	to display affection	E	NN
22.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
23.	scribbles	alone			self	to experiment with print forms; to explore print	E	NN
24.	love letter	alone						
25	love letter	alone			other (Uncle)	to display affection	E	NN
26.	birthday greeting (self)	alone			self	to entertain self	E	NN
27. X								
28.	birthday greeting (self)	alone			self other (unknown) G	to entertain self; to assert presence	E T	NN
29. X								

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
30/31.	sign	alone			other (unknown) W to give direction	to warn, direct attention;	T	NN
32.	story in book form	alone, but at a friend's house	knowledge of book format	just thought of making a book	self other (unknown) G	to tell a story; to detail events	E	N
33.	story in book form	alone, Mother sewed book	knowledge of book format		self other (unknown) G	to assert presence; to tell a story	E	N
34.	love letter	with Brother, playing post office			other (Mum)	to direct; to display affection	T E	NN
35.	love letter	with Brother, playing post office			other (Mum)	to direct; to display affection	T E	N
36.	love letter	with Brother, playing post office			other (Mum)	to direct; to display affection	T E	NN
37.	song lyrics	alone	school song	she knows a song	self other (unknown) G	to experiment with	P	N
38.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
39.	miscellaneous words and letters	alone			other (unknown) UK	to represent information; to reply to question	T	NN

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
40.	birthday card with activities	alone, Mum assists	a friend's birthday, previous print in colouring book		other (friend)	to maintain personal relations; to direct	E T	NN
41.	info. note about Brother	alone		it was for her Brother	other (Brother)	to provide information	T	NN
42.	info. note about Sister	alone			other (Sister)	to provide	T	NN
43.	info. note about self (age)	alone			other (unknown) UK	to provide information; to assert presence	T	NN
44.	school-type activity sheet	with Brother, playing school	a school-type activity	pretending it was an activity sheet	self other (unknown) G	to demonstrate knowledge; to entertain self	T	NN
45.	birthday card with activities	alone	Father's birthday previous print in colouring book		other (Dad)	to display affection; to direct; participation	E T	NN
46.	calendar	alone	calendar model in house		self other (unknown) W	to demonstrate knowledge; to organize information	T	NN
47.	a reply	alone	reply to an oral request		other (Dad)	to respond to a question	T	NN
48.	info. note about self (age)	alone			self other (unknown) G	to assert presence; to give information	T	NN

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
49.	song lyrics	alone	copied from song learned at school		self other (unknown) G	to experiment with print form	P	N
50.	card	alone			other (Mum & Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
51.	picture with name	alone		the date was when she completed it	self other (unknown) G	to show ownership; to record an event	E T	NN
52.	picture with friend's name	alone			self other (friend)	to practice print; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN
53.	love letter to self	alone			self	to entertain self; to assert presence	E	NN
54.	labels	alone			self other (unknown) G	to label objects	T	NN
55.	labels	alone			self other (unknown) G	to label an object	T	NN
56.	number facts	with Sister, playing school			self other (unknown) UK	to demonstrate knowledge; to entertain self	T	NN
57.	calendar	alone	calendar model in home		self other (unknown) W	to organize information; to demonstrate knowledge	T	NN
58.	poem	alone		just things on television	self other (unknown) G	to experiment with form	P	N

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
59.	school type activity sheet	with Mum, Dad, Sister, Brother	phonics exercise from school		self other (family)	to demonstrate knowledge; to challenge	T	NN
60.	picture with Brother's name	alone			other (Brother)	to label others' ownership	T	NN
61.	info. note about self (age)	alone			other (unknown) G self	to provide information; to assert presence	T	NN
62.	love letter	alone		folded like an airplane in order to send it	other (Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
63.	picture with name, info. note about self (age)	alone			self other (unknown)	to show ownership; to assert presence, to provide information	T	NN
64.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
65.	love letter	alone			other (Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
66.	a query	alone			other (unknown) UK	to seek information	T	NN
67.	info. note about self (name)	alone			self other (unknown) G	to assert presence; to show ownership; to experiment with print	T	NN
68.	info. note about self (name)	alone			self other (unknown) G	to assert presence; to show ownership to experiment with print	T	NN

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1] AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2] BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3] MOFFET'S SCHEME
69.	love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
70.	number facts with name	with Sister, playing school	school activity sheet		self other (unknown) UK	to demonstrate knowledge; to show ownership	T	NN
71.	scribble	alone			self	to experiment with print, to explore print	E	NN
72.	friendly letter	alone			other (friend)	to maintain social relationships; to direct	E T	NN
73.	story in book form	alone	copied text from a book		self other (unknown) G	to practice with print; to tell a story	T E	N
74.	story in book form	alone	previous book knowledge		self other (unknown) G	to tell a story	E	N
75.	story in book form	alone	copied from book		self other (unknown) G	to record information; to practice with print	T	NN
76.	love letter	alone			other (Brother)	to display affection	E	NN
77.	card (Xmas)	alone	Christmas season		other (Cousin)	to maintain social relationship; to display affection	E	NN
78.	card (Xmas)	alone	Christmas season		other (Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
79.	Card (Xmas)	alone	Christmas season		other (Sister)	to display affection	E	NN

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
80.	menu	alone, playing restaurant	represents a veal menu		self other (family)	to represent information; to record information	T	NN
81.	menu	alone, family helps	planing for a veal meal		self other (family)	to record information;	T	NN
82.	a reply	alone	reply to a previous oral question		other (Uncle)	to reply to a question; to give information; to ask for approval	T	NN
83.	scribble	alone			self other (unknown) UK	to experiment with print form; to explore print	E	NN
84.	book (scribble)	alone			self other (unknown) UK	to explore print; to experiment with print form	E	NN
85.	card (Xmas)	alone	Christmas season		other (Brother)	to display affection	E	NN
86.	love letter	alone	commercial rubber stamp		other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
87.	phone book	Mother assisted	model in environment		self	to organize information	T	NN
88.	book (scribble)	alone, playing with Brother		playing at cursive writing like Mother and Sister	self	to explore print; to experiment with print form	E	NN
89.	number facts	alone, playing school			self other (unknown) UK	to demonstrate knowledge; to entertain self	T E	NN

UK to entertain self

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
90.	card (Valentine)	alone	Valentine's day		other (Great Aunt & Great Uncle)	to maintain personal relationships; to display affection	E	NN
91. a) b) c) d) e) f) g) h) i)	cards, (Valentine)	alone, Mother helps	Valentine's Day		self other (Brother Dad classmate teacher Sister Cousin, teacher Mum)	to maintain relations; to show ownership	E	NN
92.	friendly letter	help from Mother	a reply to a previous request		other (friend)	to maintain social relations; to respond to a request; .to express a preference; to direct	T	NN
93.	card (Valentine)	alone	Valentine's Day		other (Brother)	to display affection	E	NN
94.	love letter	alone			other (Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
95.	friendly letter	alone			other (Cousin)	to maintain social relations; to display affection	E	NN
96.	list	alone			self other (unknown) UK	to experiment with print form to explore print	E	NN
97.	card (Valentine)	alone, Mum assists	Valentine's Day		other (Grandparents)	to display affection	E	NN

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
98.	a love letter	alone			other (Mum)	to display affection	E	NN
99.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled on alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to label an object; to give information	T	N
100.	alphabet book page	alone	modeled on alphabet book		self other (unknown) G	to label an object; to give information	T	N
101.	love letter	alone			self other (unknown) UK	to label an object; to display affection	T E	NN
102. a)	scribble	alone			self	to explore print	E	NN
b)	story (book)	Mother helped	Sister was writing a similar book		self other (unknown) G	to tell a story	E	N
c)	caption	alone			other (unknown) G self	to tell a story to explore print	E	N
d)	diary	after visit to grandparents			self other (unknown) G	to tell a story	E	N
e)	diary	alone	Hallowe'en time		self other (unknown) G	to announce intentions	T	N
f)	diary	alone			self other (unknown) G	to assert a preference	T	N
103.	business letter	alone	reply to a general invitation from a children's magazine		other (unknown) W	to establish impersonal relationship; to assert a preference;	T	NN

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
104.	a reminder note	alone, Mother assists			other (Dad)	to make a request	T	NN
105.	a reminder note	alone			other (Mum & Dad)	to make a request; to pass on information	T	NN
106.	story in book form	Mother assisted			self other (unknown) G	to tell a story	E	N
107.	label	alone	copied text	traced text so it would correctly identify the animal	self other (unknown) UK	to label a picture	T	NN
108.	birthday card	alone	Cousin's birthday		other (Cousin)	to maintain personal relations; to display affection	E	NN
109.	love letter	alone	Christmas season		other (Dad)	to display affection	E	NN
110.	school-type activity	with Sister, playing school		wanted to make a game	self other (Sister)	to entertain; to demonstrate knowledge; to challenge	T	NN
111.	list	alone	staying overnight at Cousin's house	this was a list to help her pack	self	to organize items; to plan	T	NN
112.	permission slip	alone	Sister's piano recital	to allow her Brother to attend	other (brother)	to give permission	T	NN
113.	badge	with friend, playing police			self other (unknown) W	to identify person	T	NN

HEATHER

SAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	CONTEXT	IDEA SOURCE	CHILD'S EXPLICIT REASONS	[1]AUDIENCE	INTENT	[2]BRITTON'S SCHEME	[3]MOFFET'S SCHEME
114.	address label	alone			self other (unknown) G	to provide information	T	NN
115.	love letter	alone			other (Brother)	to display affection	E	NN
116.	label	alone	print on a knew box of crayons		self other (unknown) G	to experiment with print; to label aspects	T	NN
117.	list	alone		she just thought about loving each family member	self other (unknown) G	to provide	T	NN
118.	placemat	with Sister	making placemats for Father's wine club		other (Dad)	to display affection	E	NN